DUDLEY KNOX LIBRARY
NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA 93943-5002

DUDLEY KNOX LIBRARY
NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA 93943-5002

# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## Monterey, California

# THESIS

THE UNITED STATES AND TUNISIA:
A FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS

by

Eric Thor Olson

December 1985

Thesis Advisor: R. H. Magnus

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

T226725

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

| | |
|---|---|
| a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION | 1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS |
| 2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY | 3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT<br>Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited |
| 2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE | |
| 4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) | 5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) |
| 6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION<br>Naval Postgraduate School<br>6b. OFFICE SYMBOL *(If applicable)*<br>Code 56 | 7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION<br>Naval Postgraduate School |
| 6c. ADDRESS *(City, State, and ZIP Code)*<br>Monterey, California 93943-5100 | 7b. ADDRESS *(City, State, and ZIP Code)*<br>Monterey, California 93943-5100 |
| 8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION<br>8b. OFFICE SYMBOL *(If applicable)* | 9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER |
| 8c. ADDRESS *(City, State, and ZIP Code)* | 10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS<br>PROGRAM ELEMENT NO. / PROJECT NO. / TASK NO. / WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO. |

11. TITLE *(Include Security Classification)*
THE UNITED STATES AND TUNISIA: A FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS

12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S)
Olson, Eric T.

| 13a. TYPE OF REPORT | 13b. TIME COVERED | 14. DATE OF REPORT *(Year, Month, Day)* | 15. PAGE COUNT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Master's Thesis | FROM _____ TO _____ | 1985 December | 95 |

16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION

| 17 COSATI CODES | | | 18. SUBJECT TERMS *(Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| FIELD | GROUP | SUB-GROUP | Tunisia, Bourjuiba, North Afirca, Foreign Policy |
| | | | |
| | | | |

19. ABSTRACT *(Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)*

The Republic of Tunisia is an Arab Muslim nation whose primary orientation since achieving independence nearly thirty years ago has been towards Westernization and modernization. Its political stability and economic progress have been remarkable. The coming decade, however, promises to be a period of turmoil for Tunisia, as a number of social and political forces are creating an atmosphere of disunity and dissension which can be expected to undermine the national equilibrium.

For the United States, the development of events in Tunisia is a matter of concern. The loss of Tunisia as a voice of moderation in Arab affairs would cause America to lose one of its strongest allies in the region and suffer a loss of prestige and influence in the North Africa/Middle East area. Further, the concept of Westernization as a means to promote human development would be weakened.

This study analyzes the current situation in Tunisia and its implications for the United States in the context of its economic, political and strategic dimensions. American policy

| | |
|---|---|
| 20 DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT<br>☒ UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED ☐ SAME AS RPT. ☐ DTIC USERS | 21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION<br>Unclassified |
| 22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL<br>Prof. R. H. Magnus | 22b. TELEPHONE *(Include Area Code)*<br>646-2521<br>22c. OFFICE SYMBOL<br>56Mk |

19. cont'd.

goals and options are examined and recommendations for future U.S. policy toward Tunisia are made.

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

# The United States and Tunisia:
## A Foreign Policy Analysis

by

Eric Thor Olson
Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy
B.S., United States Naval Academy, 1973

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 1985

## ABSTRACT

The Republic of Tunisia is an Arab Muslim nation whose primary orientation since achieving independence nearly thirty years ago has been towards Westernization and modernization. Its political stability and economic progress have been remarkable. The coming decade, however, promises to be a period of turmoil for Tunisia, as a number of social and political forces are creating an atmosphere of disunity and dissension which can be expected to undermine the national equilibrium.

For the United States, the development of events in Tunisia is a matter of concern. The loss of Tunisia as a voice of moderation in Arab affairs would cause America to lose one of its strongest allies in the region and suffer a loss of prestige and influence in the North Africa/Middle East area. Further, the concept of Westernization as a means to promote human development would be weakened.

This study analyzes the current situation in Tunisia and its implications for the United States in the context of its economic, political and strategic dimensions. American policy goals and options are examined and recommendations for future U. S. policy toward Tunisia are made.

TABLE OF CONTENTS


I. INTRODUCTION ---------- 7

II. THE HISTORICAL SETTING ---------- 11

A. EARLY HISTORY ---------- 11

B. THE ARABS ARRIVE ---------- 12

C. THE OTTOMAN PERIOD ---------- 13

D. THE FRENCH PROTECTORATE ---------- 15

E. BOURGUIBA'S DRIVE FOR INDEPENDENCE ---------- 16

III. THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION ---------- 21

A. GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE ---------- 21

B. THE PEOPLE ---------- 23

C. ECONOMIC HISTORY ---------- 24

D. THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ECONOMY ---------- 30

E. ECONOMIC PROSPECTS ---------- 31

F. DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING ---------- 34

IV. THE POLITICAL DIMENSION ---------- 35

A. AN OVERVIEW ---------- 35

B. TUNISIA'S MODERN HISTORY ---------- 36

C. GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS ---------- 42

D. THE PASSING OF POWER ---------- 43

E. POLITICAL OPPOSITION ---------- 44

F. RESURGENT ISLAM ---------- 47

V. THE STRATEGIC DIMENSION ---------- 51

A. AN OVERVIEW ---------- 51

B. TUNISIA'S GEOPOLITICAL IMPORTANCE ---------- 52
C. TUNISIA'S MILITARY STRENGTH ---------- 53
D. THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY ---------- 55
E. THE U.S.-TUNISIAN MILITARY CONNECTION ---------- 56
VI. TUNISIA'S FOREIGN POLICY ---------- 58
A. TUNISIA'S NEIGHBORS ---------- 58
B. THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT ---------- 60
C. THE ARAB LEAGUE ---------- 62
D. WESTERN EUROPE ---------- 63
E. THE UNITED STATES ---------- 64
F. COMMUNIST COUNTRIES ---------- 65
VII. U.S. POLICY GOALS AND OPTIONS ---------- 68
A. THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION ---------- 68
B. THE POLITICAL DIMENSION ---------- 70
C. THE STRATEGIC DIMENSION ---------- 73
VIII. CONCLUSION ---------- 76
APPENDIX A: COUNTRY DATA ---------- 81
APPENDIX B: MAP OF TUNISIA ---------- 84
APPENDIX C: GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE ---------- 85
APPENDIX D: MILITARY STRENGTH ---------- 86
LIST OF REFERENCES ---------- 88
BIBLIOGRAPHY ---------- 91
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST ---------- 93

# I. INTRODUCTION

Tunisia occupies a unique position in American foreign policy. Relations between the two countries have been warm since Tunisia achieved independence in 1956, and America now counts Tunisia among its very best friends in the Arab world. From the American perspective, Tunisia has significant political and strategic importance, and the economic ties between the two countries strongly influence the character of the relationship.

Tunisia is located in North Africa, jutting up into the Mediterranean Sea at a point about midway between Gibraltar and the Suez Canal. The 90-mile straight between Tunisia and Sicily is the Mediterranean's narrowest major channel. The natural harbor at Bizerte is deep enough to permit undetected use by submarines. Control of Tunisian facilities and waters, or denial of them to a potential enemy, is of tremendous strategic importance to the United States and its European allies.

Sandwiched between Algeria and Libya, two Arab states with radical and revolutionary traditions, Tunisia has lived for years in an atmosphere of insecurity. Both countries have economic and military resources far beyond those of Tunisia, causing Tunisia to depend upon diplomacy and support from the international community for its security. Although the United States has not signed any defense treaties with Tunisia, America has supplied Tunisia with considerable military aid and training in recent years.

The United States is consistently among Tunisia's leading trading partners, providing about seven percent of Tunisia's imports and receiving about twenty-three percent of its exports in 1983 [Ref. 1:p. 587]. American

foreign aid to Tunisia is also increasing, with a total of over $97 million requested in the 1986 budget [Ref. 2:p. 676].

Politically, Tunisia has been a moderate voice in the Arab world. President-for-Life Habib Bourguiba's approach toward regional politics has been a pragmatic one that has often caused him to be at odds with other Arab leaders. He has attempted to reconcile traditional Islamic values with the need for modernization, replacing Islamic institutions with secular ones while maintaining Islam as both a state religion and social culture. Bourguiba's support of U.S. policy in the Middle East has been only recently tempered by criticism of the closeness of the American-Israeli relationship. He remains one of our closest friends in the region.

The importance of Tunisia in Middle Eastern politics has been historically underrated. Its small size, relatively poor economy and political stability have kept it off the front page of the world's newspapers and out of the minds of U.S. policy planners. In spite of the surge of interest in Middle Eastern and North African politics and economics since the turmoil of the mid-1970s, writings about Tunisia during the past decade are limited to a few books of Tunisian history, some travel guides, and several articles in academic journals. Tunisia's importance in the region has been overshadowed by its larger, richer, more powerful and more controversial neighbors.

Perhaps Tunisia has been largely ignored because some important events went unnoticed by those who should have paid more attention. The historical stability of Tunisia's domestic politics is being undermined by a combination of factors, including Bourguiba's failing health, the rise of

Islamic fundamentalism and threats by neighboring Libya and Algeria. As Bourguiba's ability to prevent challenges to his one-party rule deteriorates, opposition parties are forming coalitions in preparation for their bids for power when he finally dies. The character of Tunisia's leadership in the post-Bourguiba era will have significant impact on the politics of the region.

Tunisia gained new prominence in the region when the Arab League moved its headquarters to Tunis from Cairo following the signing of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, and when the Palestine Liberation Organization set up its headquarters in Tunis after being ousted from Lebanon in the wake of Israel's 1982 invasion and occupation of that country. Also contributing to Tunisia's new-found political importance was the election of Tunisian Habib Chatti as secretary-general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for 1984-1985 [Ref. 3:p. 204].

The United States needs to concern itself with Tunisia moreso than in past years for a number of reasons. Washington now has a military involvement in Tunisia that would be in jeopardy if Tunisia were to adopt a strict anti-Western attitude. Besides aircraft and other equipment, the U.S. would stand to lose access to Tunisian air and naval facilities.[1] Tunisia now welcomes U.S. Sixth Fleet vessels, including nuclear warships, in its ports. Repair and replenishment of Soviet vessels were stopped in response to a request by Washington, but port calls in Tunisia by Soviet ships continue [Ref. 4:p. 126]. With increasing Soviet naval movement in and out of

---

[1]According to Wright [Ref. 4:pp. 126-27], details of U.S. access to Tunisian military facilities are kept quiet, but Washington has acquired or may envision acquiring such access in exchange for arms the United States would otherwise be reluctant to provide.

Algerian and Libyan ports, the shifting military balance in the southern Mediterranean, and the uncertainty of the U.S. position in Egypt and in Greece, the importance of American access to facilities in Tunisia is obvious.

The delicacy of the political situation in and around Tunisia calls for a carefully formulated U.S. policy toward that country. Either too little or too much involvement could be dangerous to American interests. We must be prepared to protect Tunisia against real aggression without causing Tunisia to appear to be dependent upon us for its economic and political survival.

This thesis focuses on the nature and significance of the United States-Tunisia relationship by analyzing in detail its economic, political and strategic aspects. The policy goals and options of each of these three dimensions are discussed, and recommendations for future U.S. policy toward Tunisia are offered.

## II. THE HISTORICAL SETTING

### A. EARLY HISTORY

Tunisia is one of man's oldest homes. Flint tools and weapons dating back to 10,000 B.C. have been found in the coastal regions, and cave art in the Atlas mountains provides a fairly exhaustive account of life in the period from about 6,000 to 2,000 B.C. Southern Tunisia was inhabited by nomadic hunters and herders until the encroaching Sahara Desert forced them north in the second millenium B.C.

The land that is now Tunisia first became known to the rest of the world in 1101 B.C., when Phoenician sailors established Utica at the mouth of the Majerda River. It was near Utica that the great Phoenician capital city of Carthage was founded some 300 years later. By 550 B.C. , Carthage had reached a position of commercial and naval supremacy in the Mediterranean.

Carthage was at its peak during the fourth century B.C., drawing it into confrontation with the emerging power of Rome. The rivalry developed into the Punic Wars (264-241 B.C., 218-201 B.C. and 149-146 B.C.), which ended in the destruction of the Carthaginian Empire.

Carthage was incorporated within the Roman Empire and rebuilt by the Emperor Augustus. Intensive colonization brought new prosperity. During the first two centuries A.D., Carthage was the empire's second city.

As the power of Rome declined in the fourth century A.D., Carthage was lost to the Vandals, but was recovered by the Byzantines in the sixth century. The Byzantines never really took control of their new land, however, as they were occupied by feuds with their government in Constantinople, military rebellions and religious heretics. The relatively

short Byzantine period was ended by the invasion of the Arabs shortly after the death of the Prophet Mohammed in 632 A.D.

B. THE ARABS ARRIVE

The Arabs established the city of Kairouan, about 100 miles south of Carthage, as a military and religious base from which to complete their conquest of North Africa. Carthage fell to the Muslims in 693 and the Arabs began to exercise temporal and religious authority over their new subjects. Islam spread rapidly among the native Berbers, but they quickly adopted Kharijite (seceders; literally, those who emerge from impropriety) heresies.

Most of the eighth century was occupied by Berber uprisings, Islamic factional disputes, and internal Arab revolts. In the turmoil of the period, the Abbasid dynasty overthrew the ruling Umayyads and relocated the caliphate in Baghdad. After a period of total anarchy in the late eighth century, Ibrahim ibn Aghlab was appointed ruler of Ifriqiya--the area that corresponds roughly to present-day Tunisia.

The Aghlabid state existed through the ninth century. This was a prosperous period for the region, referred to by some as the "golden age." Traditions of cultural and intellectual excellence were established by the Aghlabids before their dynasty was overthrown by the Fatimids in the early tenth century.

The Fatimids were fanatical and militant Shi'as who imposed a harsh and intolerant rule. They were mostly non-Arab Muslims who resented and opposed the aristocratic manner of the desert Arabs who had become Ifriqiya's elite. The Fatimids provided the opportunity for the Berbers to

take their revenge on the Arabs who had ruled them for over two hundred years.

The Fatamids conquered Egypt and moved their capital to Cairo in 973. Ifriqiya was left in the hands of their Berber vassals, the Zirids. The economy deteriorated as trade routes shifted and, out of desperation, the Zirids denounced Shi'ism in 1049 in order to gain the economic support of the Sunni Arabs. In retaliation, the Fatimids ravaged Ifriqiya, destroying the economic and political systems.

In 1087, the Normans of southern Italy took over Ifriqiya for commercial purposes, but they let the Zirids continue their rule. Early in the twelfth century, the Zirids transferred their allegiance back to the Fatimids in Cairo. By 1160, the Almohad Muslims from Morocco had swept across Tunisia and established it as part of the empire of Marrakesh.

The authority of Baghdad was restored in the early thirteenth century with the establishment of the Hafsid government in Tunisia. The Hafsid period brought the capital of Tunisia to Tunis and made possible a second flourishing of Arab culture and scholarship. Despite several incidents of internal political intrigue and tribal unrest, the Hafsid era lasted nearly three hundred years. By the end of the fifteenth century, Tunisia had become involved in the struggle between the Spanish and Ottoman forces for control of the Mediterranean.

## C. THE OTTOMAN PERIOD

In the early sixteenth century, Khair ad-Din, the legendary pirate who had become commander in chief of the Ottoman fleet, mounted a successful seaborne assault on Tunis. The following year, Tunis was taken by Spanish

troops, but it was lost to the Turks again a few years later. In 1573, Don Juan of Austria took Tunis for just a year before losing it to a large force of Turkish sailors and soldiers. In 1574, the Hafsid Dynasty ended and Tunisia became a province of the Ottoman Empire, governed by the Turks in Algiers, with Turkish as the language of administration.

Direct Ottoman rule of Tunisia was brief, a military revolt in 1591 reducing the power and prestige of the appointed governor. By 1606, Tunisia's *de facto* independence was recognized, although it remained a part of the Ottoman Empire for over 250 years.

Trade and commerce in the first half of the seventeenth century flourished, but declined in the last years of the century because of tribal turmoil and incursions from Algiers. The eighteenth century brought stability and some prosperity, despite uncertain relations with Algeria and growing European naval power in the Mediterranean.

The French became especially interested in North Africa following the Napoleanic Wars. They occupied Algeria and made it a colony in 1830, causing Tunisia to resist the same fate for the next fifty years. A deteriorating financial condition, however, forced the Tunisian bey (commander-governor) in 1869 to accept international financial control by France, Britain and Italy. As financial collapse appeared imminent in April 1881, French forces invaded. By the Treaty of Mersa in 1883, a French protectorate was established over Tunisia and the actual government was brought under French control.

## D. THE FRENCH PROTECTORATE

The French abolished international control over Tunisia's finances in 1884, and reformed the currency along French lines in 1891. Large-scale grants of land encouraged settlers to come from France, and also from Italy. The French tackled the economic problem by developing Tunisia's natural resources, especially phosphates, for export to European markets.

During its early years as a French colony, Tunisia absorbed many aspects of French political and cultural life. It was also influenced strongly by events in other parts of the Islamic world. Inspired by the Young Turk reformers of the Ottoman Empire, a Young Tunisian movement was organized in 1908 which called for restoration of the authority of the bey along with reforms along democratic lines [Ref. 3:p. 685]. Political consciousness among Tunisians was further stirred by the achievement of independence by eastern Arab countries after World War I and the example of the Egyptian nationalist movement. In 1920, the Destour (Constitution) movement was formed by Shaikh al-Tha'libi, who had earlier been one of the founders of the pre-war Young Tunisians [Ref. 5:p. 356].

The Destour Party called for a self-governing constitutional regime with a legislative assembly. The French took conciliatory action through some administrative and economic reforms. The radical elements of the Destour movement were not satisfied and began more aggressive nationalist activity, causing the French to resort to repressive measures. Shaikh al-Tha'libi was jailed in 1920 but released in 1921 in order to prevent him from becoming a martyr [Ref. 6:p. 115]. He was exiled in 1923, and in 1925 the Destour movement was broken up under French claims (largely untrue) that it was

dominated by Communists [Ref. 3:p. 685]. Attempts to revive the Destour movement after the Depression failed, its younger members accusing the older members of collaborating with France. A new and more militant group, led by young nationalist Habib Bourguiba, formed the Neo-Destour (New Constitution) Party in 1934 [Ref. 3:p. 685].

## E. BOURGUIBA'S DRIVE FOR INDEPENDENCE

Born in French Tunisia in 1903, the son of a retired lieutenant in the Beylical Guard, Habib Bourguiba is sociologically representative of all those who struggled for independence in North Africa in the middle part of this century. As a young schoolboy during the period of Tunisian martial law (1912-1921) and the Italian takeover of Libya (1911), Bourguiba gained political awareness at an early age. At 19, he joined the then new and popular Destour Party, two years before he left Tunis for Paris to study law and political science on limited funds donated by an older brother [Ref. 7:p. 74]. In Paris, Bourguiba developed a close association with the French Left and began to form his revolutionary ideas.

Returning to Tunis with his French wife and son after five years in Paris, Bourguiba intended to practice law but found himself discriminated against in his own country because of his nationality. He was treated as nearly an equal in French liberal circles, but was looked down upon as a provincial by the old Tunis families. He became active in nationalist politics almost immediately, first as a writer for nationalist newspapers and later as founder of his own newspaper, *L'Action Tunisienne* (still one of Tunisia's leading dailies).

In 1934, Bourguiba founded the Neo-Destour (New Constitution) Party, which deliberately sought conflict with the Protectorate authorities over issues which it knew would excite the Tunisian population [Ref. 7:p. 79]. As a result, he and his group of activist friends were thrown into jail by the Protectorate authorities. Ten of his next twenty years were spent in French prisons (1934-36, 1938-43, 1952-54) [Ref. 7:p. 75]. During these two decades, Bourguiba fine-tuned his political philosophy and developed the statesman skills which would permit him to lead his nation to independence.

"Bourguibism," as his political philosophy has been called, was not so much an ideology as a set of tactics for moving from a colonial situation to independence. It is based on a belief in democracy and in the moral value of the individual. For Bourguiba, national sovereignty and independence were not the ultimate goals, but a step in the development of the Tunisian individual. The value of independence was that it would permit the transformation of men into modern citizens more readily than could be achieved under colonial domination. [Ref. 7:p. 76]

Bourguibism is socialist in that it considers human dignity to be dependent upon social welfare and economic opportunity. Bourguiba was too pragmatic, however, to try to apply the theories of Karl Marx to the Tunisian situation, rejecting Marxism as a doctrine designed only for industrialized nations. He wrote in 1931, "Tunisia is a country of middle classes and peasants, those whom the radical represents in France and whom socialism is trying to capture by battering the brain of Karl Marx." [Ref. 7:p. 76] Bourguiba's Neo-Destourian socialism is really a socially-oriented nationalism.

Bourguiba faced a big challenge in presenting his Western ideals to a largely traditional Muslim society. Believing that one cannot really force a change, but can only appeal to reason, he applied his best leadership skills to cause widespread acceptance of his modernist goals. He intended to protect Islam from Western contamination by selectively borrowing Western values in the context of a modern state system [Ref. 8:p. 29].

The values of human dignity, the perfectibility of man, confidence in human solidarity, and belief in the supreme power of reason were the founding principles of Bourguiba's nation and its social harmony. Universal education was to be the basis of national solidarity and Islam was to be its social culture [Ref. 8:p. 29].

Bourguiba believed in politics as the art of attaining the possible. In negotiating, he never took what was offered unless it held the promise of facilitating further gain. As a means for transforming a protectorate to an independent nation, Bourguibism proved to be an extremely effective philosophy.

In prison, Bourguiba continued to attract national attention, and by 1936 his story had captured the imagination of the younger generation. With highly developed skills as an orator, negotiator and political organizer, his leadership of the Neo-Destour Party and its drive for independence were unquestioned. Habib Bourguiba had come to personify the Tunisian nationalist movement.

The Neo-Destour Party's alliance with the Confédération Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens (UGTT), a collection of labor unions, made it the main mouthpiece of peasant and worker interests. It supported the demands of

students and put forward generally progressive demands for universal compulsory education, academic freedom, the development of irrigation, the application of French labor and social security laws to Tunisian workers, the nationalization of the key industries, equal pay for equal work without distinction between Tunisians and Europeans, equal rights for Tunisians and Frenchmen in land distribution, and unrestricted access for Tunisians to all administrative jobs [Ref 9:pp. 102-03]. Bourguiba's skillful leadership in promoting these national and social issues, combined with a limited armed struggle against French intransigence, led to an offer in 1955 of "internal autonomy" which implied the gain of only a small portion of the nationalist's demands. Bourguiba, as president of the Neo-Destour Party, agreed to the offer immediately.

Bourguiba's acceptance of the French offer led to a serious conflict within the party. Salah ben Youssef, the party's secretary-general, felt that Bourguiba had sold out the party by the "autonomy" compromise, and he urged the continuation of the armed struggle [Ref. 10:p. 49]. Bourguiba managed to have ben Youssef expelled from the party and, in response, ben Youssef declared war on the new government and led his followers in a campaign of terrorism. He finally fled to Tripoli and was later assassinated by Tunisian agents in Germany (his murder officially remains unsolved) [Ref. 10:p. 50].

The conflict with ben Youssef helped, rather than hurt, Bourguiba by causing the French to side with Bourguiba as the more moderate of the two leaders. In order to ensure that the nationalists were not encouraged to support ben Youssef, France made further concessions to Bourguiba beyond

the promised "internal autonomy." This combination of circumstances permitted Bourguiba to achieve independence for Tunisia on March 20th, 1956, only nine months after he had accepted the offer of "internal autonomy".

## III. THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

### A. GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

The Republic of Tunisia is a nation still relatively unknown to the American people. Because of its richer and more powerful neighbors, Tunisia is all too often overlooked by writers of North African and Middle Eastern affairs.

Geographically, Tunisia occupies a wedge of North Africa between Algeria and Libya, jutting northward into the Mediterranean Sea at a point about midway between Gibraltar and the Suez Canal. It has been a crossroads between Europe and the Middle East since the beginning of recorded history.

Tunisia is the smallest country of North Africa, with a land area of 63,362 square miles (163,610 square kilometers) [Ref. 11:p. 247] - roughly the size of Missouri, or of England and Wales together. It has 810 miles (1300 kilometers) of shoreline [Ref. 12], facing north and east, indented by three major gulfs--Tunis, Al Hammamat and Gabes. The Atlas Mountains, which stretch across North Africa from southwestern Morocco, ends abruptly in northeastern Tunisia. Although the Atlas peaks in Morocco and Algeria are much higher, they average less than 1000 feet of elevation in Tunisia. Another mountain chain, the Dorsale ('backbone'), crosses Tunisia in a northeasterly direction and plunges into the Mediterranean at Cape Bon.

About one-fourth of Tunisia's land area lies north of the Dorsale range. Because it receives the heaviest rainfall, this northern section has the nation's richest soil and highest population density. The ground is generally

high and the climate characteristically Mediterranean. It is bisected by the Mejerda River, which flows eastward to the Gulf of Tunis. The Mejerda Valley contains Tunisia's richest farmland.

The Dorsale range is an unfortunate geographic feature for Tunisia because it prevents moisture-bearing winds from reaching the southern part of the country, depriving it of the rain it needs for cultivation. No water-ways of note exist south of the Dorsale.

Central Tunisia is a region of scanty rainfall and poor soils inland giving way to a littoral known as the Sahel near the eastern coast. Two inland subregions are called the High Steppes and the Low Steppes, as elevation decreases away from Algeria toward the Sahel. Population in the steppes is sparse, and the land provides only for some pasturing and the cultivation of a small amount of grain.

The Sahel, which includes the offshore islands of Djerba and Qarqanna, receives only a little more rain than the steppes, but a heavy dew permits large-scale cultivation of olives and cereals. Socially, the Sahel is much like the northern region, with a large population and intense economic and political activity.

The southern part of Tunisia is dry, low in elevation, and sparsely populated. Inland are numerous *chotts* (salt marshes which were probably once part of the Mediterranean Sea) that lie below sea level, and higher oases that are surrounded by date palms. Further south are the plateaus that make up Tunisia's portion of the Sahara Desert. The coast in the southern region is narrow and fringed with by lagoons and salt flats. The few residents of this region are traditional nomads or oasis-dwellers.

B. THE PEOPLE

The population of Tunisia was estimated in 1984 to be 6.9 million, and the overall density was 109 per square mile (42 per square kilometer). About 52 percent of the population lived in urban areas, with Tunis by far the largest city at 1.2 million people [Ref. 11:p. 247]. Only four other cities (Sfax, Sousse, Bizerte and Kairouan) had over 50,000 inhabitants [Ref. 10:p. 68].

Tunisians are a mixture of Arab and Berber stock. Whereas elsewhere in northern Africa the indigenous Berbers make up substantial minorities of the populations, in Tunisia they are represented by only about 2 percent of the people. About one-half of today's Berbers retain the Berber language of pre-Arab Tunisia. Small Arab Christian and Jewish communities remain, along with about 50,000 non-Arab (mostly French) foreigners [Ref. 10:pp. 70-71]. Arabic is the official language, but French is still the principal language of business.

The overall quality of life for Tunisians is relatively high, closer to that in Spain and parts of Italy than to that in other developing countries. The literacy rate is 62 percent, and about 85 percent of the children attend school [Ref. 1:p. 587]. Health and sanitation conditions are improving rapidly, and most serious endemic diseases have been eliminated or are under control. The civil status of women is almost equal to that of men, and far higher than in other Arab countries.

Except for the few remaining Christians and Jews, virtually all Tunisians are Muslims of the "orthodox" Sunni sect (those who follow the Malikite legal

system). The only other exceptions are on the island of Djerba where about 40,000 of the population adheres to austere Kharijite beliefs.

## C. ECONOMIC HISTORY

Tunisia's economy has been mostly that of a poor country. It had no industrial base when it achieved independence, and it is relatively deprived of natural resources. It does not compete strongly in exports and has a small internal market. The unemployment rate is high. With little prospect of generating wealth from its own resources, Tunisia's economy is very much subject to external forces.

Prior to French colonization, Tunisia had little economic activity. Agricultural production met grazing and internal consumption needs only, and the mineral resources were almost unexploited. Primary exports were religious caps from Tunis and handwoven rugs from Kairouan [Ref. 9:p. 219].

The French discovered the large phosphate reserves in central Tunisia and exploited them for export to Europe. In 1930, Tunisia was the world's second largest phosphate producer, and phosphates remain to this day one of of Tunisia's major exports. The small national railway system was originally constructed to transport phosphates to Tunis. Also exported during the French period were iron ore, lead and zinc, but deposits of these minerals were either small or low-grade and production has fallen off since independence.

French contributions to agricultural development centered on citrus fruits, olive oil, wheat and wine--all cultivated in the low and moist coastal areas.

The French colonization experience still affects Tunisia's economy, both positively and negatively. Besides the railway system, most roads, harbors, and public buildings were constructed during the French period. French medical knowledge lowered the death rate without changing the birth rate, greatly expanding the overall population and workforce.

The French did not, however, pay adequate attention to educational services and training facilities. Seventy-five percent of the population was illiterate when Tunisia gained independence, leaving the new country dependent on mostly foreign management [Ref. 9:p. 221].

The first few years of independence saw a slow deterioration of the economy as the French returned with their capital and skills to France. President Bourguiba was not trained in economics, and his political preoccupation resulted in a *laissez-faire* economic policy [Ref. 5:pp. 380-81]. Bourguiba adopted conservative economic strategies which encouraged a gradual adjustment to the loss of colonial capital and human resources [Ref. 9:p. 222].

Although no dramatic economic policies were instituted immediately after independence, a number of significant social changes were made which had long-term effects on the economy. In 1956, a Code of Personal Status was approved which established a minimum legal age for marriage. Other programs improved the status of women and encouraged family planning. Combined with improved medical and educational services, the size, quality and adaptability of the labor force were substantially enhanced [Ref. 9:p. 222].

A major change in economic policy did not occur until Ahmed Ben Salah was made Secretary of State for Planning and Finance in 1961. His ambitious plan for the next decade, divided into three- and four-year plans, set out four objectives for economic and social development: decolonization; reform of economic structures, including industrialization; human development, including education, and the fight against unemployment; and self-development, in order to permit investment from internal resources. [Ref. 5:p. 381]

The Ben Salah's plan identified agricultural reform as the first priority, and outlined an industrial growth plan that would begin with a few basic industries like oil refining and steel production. The most significant feature of his plan was the imposition of a cooperative system in production and trade. This system was resisted by most farmers and workers, causing it to end in failure. [Ref. 9:p. 222]

Whether the positive aspects of Ben Salah's programs outweighed the negative is difficult to determine. Tunisia did see a large increase in foreign aid and loans due to its new political stability. Provision of technical assistance and teachers from France helped improve the skills of the labor force, and a number of large projects such as dams, reforestation and soil conservation were begun. Agricultural production did not increase substantially, however, and the foreign debt more than quadrupled between 1961 and 1971 [Ref. 5:p. 381]. Although commercial and service employment opportunities swelled with the departure of the French, migration from rural to urban areas far exceeded the number of jobs available. By the late 1960s, the cities were centers of high unemployment.

In 1969, the economic condition was further worsened when a series of floods destroyed much of the infrastructural development of the past decade. [Ref. 9:p. 223]

In late 1969, President Bourguiba chose to adopt a more liberal approach to the economy. He replaced Ben Salah with a team of politicians who reoriented the Tunisian economy towards a free market system [Ref. 9:p. 223]. The subsequent economic boom is probably due less to the new policies than to the influence of external forces.

Oil was first discovered in Tunisia in 1966, but production did not reach a level which permitted export until 1970. The use of oil as an economic weapon following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War benefited Tunisia greatly, although Tunisia was not a member of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries. Between 1972 and 1974, the value of Tunisia's oil exports tripled while production remained about the same. [Ref. 9:p. 224]

During the same years, exceptionally good weather in Tunisia contributed to record levels of citrus and olive oil production. A 1974 increase in world phosphate prices also caused production of that mineral to reach an unprecedented level [Ref. 10:p. 148].

Tunisia also reaped benefits from the expanding European economics of the 1970s. The post-war growth of European industry created labor shortages, and many Tunisians took advantage of the opportunity for foreign employment. The resident Tunisian population in France grew from 52,000 in 1965 to about 100,000 in 1970 to nearly 150,000 in 1973 [Ref. 9:pp. 224, 246]. When recession began to hit Europe in 1973, many Tunisians found work in newly rich Libya.

Another rapidly expanding sector of the economy in the 1970s was tourism. The significant effort which went into creating the tourist industry was well rewarded in terms of foreign exchange. Direct and indirect employment as a result of tourism was estimated at nearly 144,000 in 1983 [Ref. 11:p. 246], and the industry accounted for more than twenty percent of foreign currency earnings in that year [Ref. 10:p. 162].

The European Economic Community (EEC) is where external forces have worked against Tunisia. Tunisia finds itself severely hindered by the trade barriers set up by the EEC to protect its members against competition. The agricultural sector, especially olive oil, was hardest hit because of the preferential access to European markets given to Italy.

Lastly, a law approved in 1972 gives major fiscal advantages to foreign companies which invest in Tunisian production principally for export. The law has resulted in greatly increased levels of foreign investment from several industrialized nations. [Ref. 11:p. 246]

In spite of the attraction of private capital to Tunisia's industrial sector, industrial output in the 1970s was disappointing. Private investment was very selective, requiring the government to get involved in order to keep development relatively balanced. On the whole, the 1970s brought a larger industrial base, with significant increases in production of building materials, electrical and metalurgical products, and chemicals. Development of oil refining capacity matched the increase in oil production. Leather, textile, and most food and dairy products, however, failed to keep pace with increasing domestic demand. [Ref. 9:p. 234]

As the unpleasant experiment of cooperative farming was replaced by a return to private ownership, the production of the main cereal, citrus and vegetable crops increased dramatically. Also aided by good weather, the total value of agricultural production rose 70 percent between 1970 and 1975 [Ref. 9:p. 232]. These figures encouraged further investment by both private and foreign aid organizations, bringing mechanization and irrigation to Tunisian farmlands.

The agricultural picture was not all rosy, however, as poor weather in the late 1970s caused a decrease in production of all major crops. Further, the Western European market for many of Tunisia's food products, especially olive oil, was reduced as a result of EEC policies. Since 1975, Tunisia has had a negative balance of trade in food products, with imports costing $180 million more than the value of exports in 1981 [Ref. 9:p. 234].

In 1981, 16 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) came from agriculture, 29 percent from industry, construction and mining, 33 percent from commerce and transportation and 4 percent from tourism--indicating a fairly well-balanced economy. From 1971 to 1981, the GNP showed a respectable growth rate of 7 percent per year, and the debt service ratio was only 12 to 14 percent. [Ref. 13:p. 58]

In 1982, poor weather and the depressed European economy negatively affected agricultural production and the market for Tunisian phosphates, respectively. As a result the GDP growth rate dropped to 1.5 percent and the debt service ratio rose to 17.5 percent. The growth rate improved to 4.5 percent in 1983, but a poor grain crop and a drop in tourism (the PLO had

moved its headquarters to Tunis in 1982) raised the debt service ratio to 18.2 percent. The 1983 trade deficit was $1.25 billion. [Ref. 13:p. 58]

## D. THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Tunisia's economy in the mid-1980s is generally undeveloped. Relatively prosperous and successful for an African country, its problem now is in trying to sustain the progress it has made since achieving independence. The population is expecting continued rapid growth, but it may be disappointed.

The most serious economic problem of this decade is unemployment. About 60 percent of Tunisia's 6.9 million people is under the age of 25. Twenty to twenty-five percent of the active population as a whole is unemployed or underemployed. Unemployment is running at 30 percent or more among the 16 to 25 age group. [Ref. 11:p. 245]

The government estimates that 40,000 new jobs per year must be created to keep pace with new arrivals on the labor market during the Sixth Plan (1982-1986). In 1982 and 1983 the number of new jobs fell short of the target by several thousand per year [Ref. 11:p. 245]. Those who cannot find employment at home are encouraged to go to Europe, Algeria, Libya or the Gulf states to find work, the intention being that they should send money back to Tunisia while they are gone and then eventually return home and establish employment-creating enterprises. Overseas employment, however, is also falling short of target. Europe is discouraging employment of Tunisians because of its own economic problems. Algeria doesn't have many jobs to fill, the deterioratng political relationship with Libya is causing

thousands of Tunisians to be sent home, and working in the Gulf region is not popular with young Tunisians.

Oil remains the biggest earner of foreign currency, with an export figure of 60,000 barrels per day (out of a total production of 110,000 barrels per day) in 1983. Nearly 90 percent of total oil output comes from two fields, and both are experiencing a decline in production. Several new fields are ready for exploration, but no further major oil discoveries are expected. `The outlook for oil revenues is good for the next few years, but Tunisia's internal consumption will probably match its production capability by the end of the decade. [Ref. 11:p. 246]

Tourism has become Tunisia's second biggest source of foreign exchange, behind oil and ahead of expatriate workers' remittances, light industry and phosphates [Ref. 11:p. 246]. Income from tourism has multiplied ten times in the last decade as a result of a focused government effort, but opportunities for further growth in the tourist industry are limited. The number of tourists has not increased since 1982, when 1.4 million visitors were recorded, and few new hotels or resorts are planned [Ref. 11:p. 247].

Recent efforts to attract investment in light industry have been moderately successful. About 330 companies, mostly German and French, have established themselves in Tunisia [Ref. 11:p. 246]. They use the cheaper Tunisian labor to make such products as textiles, tires, paper pulp or simple electronic parts for re-import into their home countries.

Tunisia remains a major producer of phosphates, and also produces iron ore, lead concentrates, zinc, salt, and cement for export.

Agricultural exports include fruit, and olive oil and wine. About 30 percent of the total area of Tunisia is cultivated arable land, and little land is left for agriculture without irrigation [Ref. 11:p. 247].

Economic gloom is prevalent in the mid-1980s. The 1984 balance of payments deficit was $650 million - up 20 percent from 1983. At the start of 1985, external debt was $3.5 billion (equivalent to half the GNP), pushing the debt-service ratio to a new high of 25 percent. The only growth industries are phosphates and phosphoric acids. [Ref. 14:p. 5]

TABLE 1: TUNISIAN IMPORTS AND EXPORTS (MILLION $US)

| | 1972 | 1974 | 1976 | 1978 | 1980 | 1982 | 1983 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imports | 466 | 1128 | 1529 | 2138 | 3526 | 3438 | 3100 |
| Exports | 315 | 921 | 788 | 1126 | 2231 | 1960 | 1800 |

SOURCE: [Ref. 15:p. 90]

## E. ECONOMIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Tunisia's Sixth Plan calls for economic policies similar to those of the Fifth Plan, in spite of the problems experienced under that plan. In an effort to increase the number of available jobs, the largest investment is in services including tourism. Also emphasized is the creation of mechanical and relatively sophisticated electrical industries. By early 1984, in fact, eight automobile and engineering companies had assembly plants under construction or already operating.[2] There is a special effort to attract American companies, which, it is hoped, will think of Tunisia as a manufacturing base for the Middle East and North Africa. Only seven or

---

[2] Peugeot, Renault, Daimler-Benz, Volkswagen, Klockner Humbolt Deutz, Fiat, Volvo and General Motors [Ref. 11:p. 246]

eight American companies, however, have shown an interest in investing in the country [Ref. 11:p. 246].

TABLE 2: TUNISIAN INVESTMENT FOR THE FIFTH AND SIXTH PLANS
(UNITS: MILLION TUNISIAN DINARS)

| | Fifth Plan | | Sixth Plan | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Amount | % | Amount | % |
| Agriculture | 575 | 13.8 | 950 | 13.6 |
| Manufacturing | 787 | 18.9 | 1,400 | 20.0 |
| Non-manufacturing Industry | 880 | 21.1 | 1,700 | 24.3 |
| Services (incl. Tourism) | 1,509 | 36.2 | 2,350 | 33.5 |
| (Tourism) | (62) | (1.5) | (250) | (3.6) |
| Public Services | 417 | 10.0 | 600 | 8.6 |
| Total | 4,168 | 100.0 | 6,250 | 100.0 |

SOURCE: [Ref. 9:p. 235]

Tunisia provides both advantages and disadvantages as an industrial base. It provides corporate tax and customs concessions to form companies as well as an efficient and uncorrupt bureaucracy and rules which are administered consistently. Labor is cheaper than in most industrialized countries, although more expensive than in Egypt, Morocco and the Far East.

On the negative side, wages in Tunisia have risen dramatically in recent years. The trade unions are powerful and are more concerned with their working members than with finding jobs for the unemployed. Further, domestic price controls and very high personal taxes levied on foreign employees increase the cost of manufacturing in Tunisia. The cost of a foreign manager to his company in Tunisia are said to be four times normal Western levels [Ref. 66].

F. ECONOMIC PROSPECTS

With the government's decision to encourage foreign investment, it lost much of its ability to determine its own economic future. Tunisia's economic prospects will be determined mostly be external influences, and many potential pitfalls exist.

Tunisia cannot continue to rely on oil revenues. Unemployment is an ever-growing problem. Natural resources are limited, as are markets for agricultural products.

Further economic development in Tunisia at this point seems to depend on the country's ability to attract foreign capital in order to create jobs. Tunisia has been fortunate in that it has not had to devote large amounts of money to military weapons and equipment; defense spending has averaged around 3 percent of GNP for several years [Ref. 15:p. 48]. An increase in military expenditures in the last half of this decade would divert Tunisia's scarce financial resources away from more profitable investment.

The biggest boon to Tunisia's economy over the past three decades has been its political stability. The steady leadership of President Bourguiba has reduced economic uncertainty and provided continuity to the course of development. Bourguiba's death or removal from office will no doubt cause a period of economic re-evaluation, with a likely result being a reversal of the trend toward Westernization.

## IV. THE POLITICAL DIMENSION

### A. AN OVERVIEW

Tunisia is a rare and unparalleled phenomenon in the contemporary Middle East. For nearly thirty years since achieving independence, it has been a model of political stability and social tranquility. Created and led by President-for-life Habib Bourguiba, Tunisia has resolutely and somewhat successfully pursued its goals of modernization and economic development. It has been consistent in both domestic and foreign policy objectives. Tunisia's political future, however, is not likely to be as tranquil as its past. Several forces are at work in Tunisian society which threaten its long-term stability.

President Bourguiba and the small group of elites[3] which has staffed his party and his government since independence are beginning to lose their appeal. The reverence that older Tunisians feel for their national hero is not shared by those who did not experience firsthand the struggle for independence.

The emphasis on education and the consequent process of urbanization have caused traditional family ties and regional loyalties to be weakened. Young Tunisians, newly educated and urbanized, are finding their upward mobility blocked by the less-qualified incumbents of elite positions. This

---

[3]In 1980, the 36 members of the Council of Ministers and the Party Political Bureau formed a closely-knit group. Averaging 53 years of age (compared to 41 years at independence), these elites are generally well-educated and from similar social and economic origins. They are disproportionately drawn from Tunis and the Sahel region. [Ref. 16]

closed group of aging leaders is no longer able to rally support for its policies and initiatives, causing some segments of the population to look elsewhere for ideological satisfaction. Islam is providing these Tunisians, especially the disenchanted youth, with a solid and tested option in their search for cultural identity and equality.

Tunisians are also finding themselves caught in the value struggle between the West and the rest of the Arab world. The historic Tunisian ability to deal openly as a friend with France, the United States and other Western powers is deteriorating in the face of prevalent anti-Western sentiment. Tunisia has even been dramatically drawn into the Arab-Israeli conflict from which it had remained distant for so many years.

The threats to Tunisian equilibrium are exacerbated by the impending end of the Bourguiba regime. Although the constitution calls for an orderly transfer of power to Prime Minister Mohammed Mzali when Bourguiba dies, it is unlikely that Mzali's transition to chief of state will go unchallenged. Whoever emerges as Tunisia's next leader will undoubtedly make a show of cooling relations with the West, as did Egypt's Mubarak in the wake of President Sadat's assassination.

This, then, is a critical time for Tunisia and for those nations which have some stock in Tunisia's future. How it deals with the current internal and external pressures will play a large part in determining whether Westernization retains any vigor in the Arab world.

## B. TUNISIA'S MODERN HISTORY

On 25 March 1956, five days after France formally recognized the independence of Tunisia, elections were held in which all 98 seats in the

constituent assembly were won by supporters of the Neo-Destour Party. On 11 April, Habib Bourguiba became Prime Minister, leading a government in which 16 of the 17 ministers belonged to the Neo-Destou. Bourguiba immediately began to consolidate his internal position. [Ref. 3:p. 686]

One of Bourguiba's first efforts was to rid Tunisia of the French military presence. The French were reluctant to leave, however, because of the deteriorating situation in Algeria. When Bourguiba began to actively support the Algerian independence movement, friction with France caused him to break diplomatic relations for several months. In the meantime, Bourguiba made moves to strengthen relations with Libya and Morocco. In July 1957, the constituent assembly established the office of the president and invested Bourguiba with the powers of head of state. [Ref. 3:p. 686]

Although diplomatic relations with France were resumed in early 1957, the political tension between the two countries in connection with the Algerian revolt increased. Several French-Tunisian clashes occurred, the most serious being an attack by French aircraft from Algeria in February 1958. Bourguiba again severed diplomatic relations and demanded the immediate evacuation of all French bases in Tunisia. At the same time, the extraterritorial status of Bizerte, a seaport on Tunisia's northern coast, was unilaterally abolished. Despite attempts by the United States, Britain and the United Nations to mediate, the situation worsened until the accession to power of General de Gaulle in June 1958. By October the only French troops remaining in Tunisia were in Bizerte, and that city's status was being negotiated. French-owned transport and electrical services were

nationalized, and proposals were announced for the purchase of all agricultural land in Tunisia owned by French citizens. [Ref. 3:p. 686]

Freed from his struggle with France, Bourguiba began to concentrate his efforts on strengthening his personal power. He reformed the party structure of the Neo-Destour to enhance his authority and began trial procedures against several political opponents, including his nemesis from pre-independence days, Salah ben Youssef.

The trial was evidence of a widening gap between Tunisia and the United Arab Republic (UAR), from where ben Youssef had been conducting his political activities. Tunisia had joined the Arab League in October 1958, but withdrew 10 days later after accusing the UAR (under Nasser) of attempts at domination. Diplomatic relations were severed the same month on grounds of Egyptian involvement in a Youssefist attempt to assassinate Bourguiba.

Tunisia's long-awaited constitution was finally promulgated in June 1959. The new constitution, developed under Bourguiba's watchful eye, legitimized his dominance over the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government. In the elections held in November 1959, Bourguiba ran for president unopposed and all 90 seats in the new assembly went to the Neo-Destour.

Following a period of improved relations with France, the situation concerning the French occupation of the military base at Bizerte again turned sour. The issue came to a head in July 1961, and fighting erupted between Tunisian and French troops. After more than two weeks of conflict, the fighting ended with the French in firm control of the Bizerte base. More than 800 Tunisians had been killed. The Bizerte dispute did not end until June

1962, when the French turned the base over to Tunisia following the March cease-fire in Algeria. The immediate results of the Bizerte crisis were a rapprochement between Tunisia and other Arab states, a cooling of relations with the West and an improvement of relations with the Communist bloc [Ref. 3:p. 687].

In May 1964, Tunisian expropriation of all foreign-owned lands caused the French to cancel all financial aid. In spite of his now dire financial status, Bourguiba took advantage of the French act by using it to emphasize Tunisian independence and socialism. He changed the Neo-Destour's party name to *Parti Socialiste Destourien* (Destour Socialist Party--PSD). In the November 1964 elections, Bourguiba was again elected unopposed and the PSD won all 90 seats in the national assembly. With Bourguiba's dominance unchallenged and internal political conditions becoming more settled, the government's attention turned toward economic development. [Ref. 3:p. 687]

From 1964 through 1969, economic development efforts, especially the collective agriculture experiment, dominated Tunisia's internal politics. The failure of the policies of the Minister of Finance and Planning, Ahmed Ben Salah, led to his dismissal from government in late 1969. Ben Salah was tried and sentenced to 10 years' hard labor, but he escaped from prison in 1973 and took refuge in Europe, from where he now leads the radical opposition group *Mouvement d'Unité Populaire* (Popular Unity Movement--MUP).

Over the next few years, several ministers and political opponents received harsh treatment as Bourguiba worked to strengthen his grip on the country. In September 1974, the PSD elected Bourguiba as president-for-life

of the party. In the elections of November 1974, Bourguiba again ran unopposed and all 112 PSD national assembly candidates were re-elected. The assembly amended the constitution to allow for the appointment of a national president-for-life, and then elected Bourguiba to that position in March 1975. Additional constitutional reforms, which further increased presidential authority, were made in December 1975. Nearly all organizations opposed to the PSD were declared illegal. [Ref. 3:p. 688]

Domestic political unrest was evident by 1977, when Bourguiba began to show signs of poor health. Uncertainty over the future of the Bourguiba-dominated system of government contributed to popular demands for political liberation and the development of a multi-party democracy. In spite of continued government attempts at suppression, several movements emerged in what appeared to a be a struggle for leadership of post-Bourguiba Tunisia.

When Mohamed Mzali became prime minister in April 1980, increased government tolerance of political opposition became apparent. Amnesty was granted to some imprisoned or exiled opponents, and a few ministers who had previously been dismissed from their posts were allowed to return to government. In April 1981, Bourguiba declared that he saw no objection to the emergence of political parties which rejected violence and religious fanaticism and were not dependent "ideologically or materially" on any foreign group (thereby suggesting that the communists and Islamic fundamentalists still were not to be tolerated). Elections to be held in November were announced, with the promise that any participating group

which received five percent of the votes cast would be officially recognized as a political party. [Ref. 3:p. 690]

July 1981 brought the end to Tunisia's one-party system with the official recognition of the *Parti Communiste Tunisien* (Tunisian Communist Party--PCT)--tolerated because it had no connection to the Soviet Union. Because it had formerly been a recognized party, it did not have to meet the five percent requirement.

Three parties, including the PCT, opposed the PSD in the November elections, but the PSD received 94.6 percent of the votes cast and won all 136 seats in the new assembly. No other party received 5 percent of the vote and none was given official recognition. In the face of formal protests of electoral irregularities, the *Mouvement des Democrates Socialistes* (Social Democrats--MDS) and MUP were officially recognized in November 1983. [Ref. 3:p. 690]

In local elections held in May 1985, all 3,540 candidates presented on the PSD list were elected to positions in 245 districts. Although the elections were officially boycotted by the Democratic Socialists (MDS), the Communist Party (PCT), the Popular Unity Movement (MUP) and the labor union (UGTT), as well as by the Islamic Tendency Movement (TMI), 92.84 percent of eligible voters participated. [Ref. 17:pp. 7644-45]

In order to lessen the effect of the decision of the other parties not to present candidates, the PSD presented twice as many candidates, including some who were not affiliated with the PSD. According to PSD figures, 70 percent of those elected had not held office before, 50 percent are between

25 and 40 years old, 33 percent have studied at universities, and 14 percent are women [Ref. 17:pp. 7644-45].

The Tunisian public undoubtedly would have preferred a ballot with a wider choice of candidates, but the large voter turnout and overwhelming PSD victory indicate continuing confidence in that party. Public support of the PSD, however, may not be quite as strong as the numbers indicate.

## C. GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

The political structure of Tunisia is, and always has been, dominated by Habib Bourguiba and the PSD. Although other political parties are now officially recognized, the country remains effectively a one-party system.

The PSD evolved from a large underground movement in the period immediately following independence. It maintains local-level cells in villages, city neighborhoods and large economic organizations. The structure is centralized through regional coordination committees which report to central committee. Above these is a political bureau, the top leadership of the party, whose members are appointed by the president. This structure permits Bourguiba to legitimize (at least nominally) high-level political appointments and dismissals.

The government administration structure closely parallels the party structure. It begins at the local level with elected municipal councils in cities and larger towns and appointed officials in rural areas. The president appoints regional governors and the interior minister appoints other regional officials. At the national level, the president appoints ministers, whose ministries are staffed by a few appointed officials and a permanent civil service. There is an elected National Assembly whose members run on a

party list basis. Suffrage is universal adult and secret. The National Assembly debates and ratifies legislations. Although it can originate laws, presidential proposals take precedence. When the Assembly is in session, legislative procedures assure support for governmental proposals before they are introduced for debate. [Ref. 10:pp. 173-74]

Important to the government system is the fact that membership in the government structure and party leadership almost completely overlap. The accusation that this system is undemocratic is countered with the argument that debate, criticism and opposition are permitted within the party structure--providing both democracy and national unity in a one-party system.

Most national organizations are affiliated with the PSD, and they actively support government policies. Strict adherence to the party line, however, is becoming less common in the current atmosphere of political liberalization.

Appendix C contains a diagram of the Tunisian government structure.

## D. THE PASSING OF POWER

The succession to the presidency of Tunisia is now constitutionally guaranteed, calling for the transition of power to the prime minister. The new president is to be confirmed by a plebiscite concurrently with the election of candidates to the National Assembly. Because neither the current, nor any potential, prime minister possesses Bourguiba's charisma or political leverage, the election will necessarily involve a period of coalition-building.

The Destourian Socialist Party is aging, and may even die, along with its founder. Prime Minister Muhammed Mzali, who has held his current position since 1980, is a former university professor who is respected for his

honesty and intelligence but not his leadership ability. Mzali will assume the party leadership when Bourguiba dies, but he is not popular among either the elites or the people [Ref. 8:pp. 35-36]. Strongly under Bourguiba's influence, Mzali has had little opportunity to exercise his own political will. Because of his position, it is probable that he will succeed to the presidency, but it is unlikely that he will serve that office for much more than a transition period. He probably signals the end of the Bourguibist era.

Playing an important role in determining who will succeed Bourguiba in the long term is his second wife, Wassila, who comes from one of Tunis' wealthiest families. She has long been considered the power behind the throne, although Bourguiba often goes out of his way to demonstrate his independence of her. Her power will, of course, be severely curtailed when he dies, so she can be expected to use her influence while he is alive to maneuver someone who is favorably disposed toward her into position to be his successor. She is not likely to support Mzali and will probably promote someone from her pet group, the bourgeoisie of Tunis. Her current favorite is Defense Minister Salah ad-Din Bali [Ref. 18].

## E. POLITICAL OPPOSITION

Several political forces have emerged in Tunisia in the past decade. A brief look at some of the most significant will be helpful.

### 1. The *Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens* (General Tunisian Trade Union--UGTT)

Actually a federation of labor unions, the UGTT claims almost one million members, making it by far the largest independent national organization. Although it has a long history of cooperation with the

government, incidents of disagreement are becoming more frequent and dramatic. The most significant example was the general strike of January 1978 during which labor activists and government troops clashed, resulting in many deaths and a level of violence unprecedented in independent Tunisia. Efforts were made by both sides to ease the tension following the strike, but the UGTT remains a hotbed of independent thought. The UGTT leadership is determined to have its own say in the future development of the country. It clearly supports the socialist option. [Ref. 9:p. 111]

2. The *Union Générale des Etudiants Tunisiens* (General Union of Tunisian Students--UGTT).

A student organization founded clandestinely in 1952 under the auspices of the Neo-Destourians, the UGET has become a voice against some PSD actions. It has members both in Tunisia and abroad . The UGET has been responsible for some general campus unrest, but it has not formed a clear ideology. The composition of the UGET is continually changing as students graduate, but its former members often move into elite-level positions in society. Although not currently effective, the UGET is a potential center of political power. [Ref. 9:p. 112]

3. The *Mouvement d'Unité Populaire* (Popular Unity Movement -- MUP)

The MUP is a social democratic movement opposed to the Bourguiba regime. Led by the exiled Ahmad ben Salah, former Minister of Finance and Planning, most of the MUP's supporters live in Europe. The MUP is supported by socialist and social-democratic parties in Europe, but it probably is not ready to present its own candidate for Tunisian elections. [Ref. 9:p. 112]

4. The Social Democrat Party

Led by Ahmed Mestiri, who held several ministerial posts in the 1960s, this is a bourgeois-democratic opposition group whose members belong to wealthy families. The Democratic Socialists are also supported by right-wing social democratic parties in Europe, and by bourgeois-progressive forces. They are prepared to run in an election and may cooperate with elements in the MUP or right-wing groups of the UGTT. [Ref. 9:pp. 112-13]

5. Muhummad Masmudi

Although also representing the bourgeois-democratic forces, Masmudi has so far refused to cooperate with the Democratic Socialists. He pushes for strong ties with Libya and Algeria and may form a coalition with any of the previously listed groups in order to build a broader political base. [Ref. 9:p. 113]

6. The Youssefists

Operating out of bases in Algeria, these remaining followers of the "martyred" ben Youssef have political influence greater than their small numbers would indicate. They are still very much anti-Bourguiba, and have been accused of being the force behind several violent anti-government actions. Although not strong enough to advance their own candidate, they could play a spoiler role in the post-Bourguiba elections. [Ref. 9:p. 113]

7. The *Parti Communiste Tunisien* (Tunisian Communist Party--PCT)

Although never officially banned, the Tunisian Communist Party was suppressed by the Bourguiba regime from 1963 to 1981. It has little popular support, but could wield some influence in an alliance with other progressive movements. [Ref. 9:p. 113]

8. The *Mouvement de Tendance Islamique* (Islamic Tendency Movement--TMI)

Probably the most powerful force emerging on the Tunisian political scene, Islamic revivalism is especially popular with the disenchanted youth. As the official representative of the popular Islamic revival movement, the MTI seeks stricter application of Islamic regulations and customs. They are promoting themselves as a political party that holds Islam as its ideology. Additional information concerning the resurgence of Islam follows later in this chapter. [Ref. 9:pp. 113-14]

9. The Army

After twenty-two years of apolitical existence, the army was changed forever in 1978 when it was used to suppress demonstrators in Tunis and other parts of the country. The junior officers, especially, question the role of the army as an instrument to preserve the political status quo, and they may seek to gain a voice in the government. They remain an uncertain element in an uneasy situation. [Ref. 9:p. 114]

## F. RESURGENT ISLAM

Bourguibism has never been hostile to Islam. Bourguiba himself always fought for the Arab-Islamic character of Tunisia as a dimension of its national personality. He has, however, continually opposed fundamental Islam as the central axis of the Tunisian identity. He maintained Islam as a social culture, but felt that strict observance of Islamic regulations would impede Tunisia's progress toward modernization. For the first twenty years of his regime, Bourguiba's treatment of Islam received widespread support.

In the last decade, Tunisian Islamic fundamentalism has experienced a rebirth. The impulse for this current resurgence of Islam comes from the grassroots of society, where the social and economic polarization of Tunisia have called into question some of the basic values of Bourguibism. Because this brand of Islam is generated by the mass citizenry, it is called *al-Islam as-Sha'bi,* or Populist Islam. Boiling upward from the deprived, alienated and frustrated, Populist Islam has now penetrated the middle classes. It is in direct confrontation with the Islam of President Bourguiba, which is called *al-Islam ar-Rasmi*, or Establishment Islam.[4] Establishment Islam seeks to preserve the political status quo.

Populist Islam is providing Tunisians, especially the youth, with a solid and tested option in their search for cultural identity and and social justice and equality.

In Tunisia, Populist Islam is divided into four major Sunni fundamentalist movements: the most extreme is the *as-Salafi* (traditional/ancestral) movement, which seeks to transform today's society into a replica of the Muslim society of 1400 years ago; less extreme is the *al-Islah* (reform) movement, which adheres to basic fundamentalist goals but recognizes the need to adapt Islam to the modern society; the *al-Ikwan al-Muslimeen* (Muslim Brotherhood), a contemporary version of the old Muslim Brotherhood founded in Egypt in 1928, is attempting to appeal to the

---

[4]The terms "Populist Islam" and "Establishment Islam" are taken from Bill [Ref. 19:pp. 108-10]. According to Bill, Populist Islam refers to "a general social and political movement generated from below rather than a movement sponsored by governments and their supporting bureaucratic apparatus."

educated and professional classes in its application of enduring Islamic principles to the changing world; the fourth group is comprised of Sufi and other mystical movements. [Ref. 19:p. 110]

Although there is tension between the four Sunni groups, they all share the following basic ideas: a fundamentalist faith in the Qur'an, the Prophet Mohammed and the Sunna (tradition); a strong opposition to corrupt and oppressive government; a commitment to the principles of human equality and social justice; and, most important to American policy, a condemnation of external intervention and imperialism in the Middle East. [Ref. 19:p. 111]

While Populist Sunni Islam represents a strong challenge to the political status quo, it is by necessity tolerated by the Bourguiba government. It is extremely difficult for any Arab leader to openly oppose Islam in a Muslim country. Past efforts in Tunisia and other Arab states to suppress religious leaders seemed only to enhance their popularity.

Instead, Bourguiba is attempting to co-opt the power of the Islamic movement by re-establishing his credibility as a Muslim leader. He has already made some concessions such as closing sidewalk cafés during fasting periods and forbidding topless bathing at public beaches. His moves in this regard, however are likely to be too little and too late to stem the growing opposition by Islamic organizations. His token efforts to Islamicize Tunisia will not correct the social and economic ills which gave strength to the Islamic movement in the first place.

Further, Bourguiba has external factors which limit his ability to satisfy restless fundamentalists. His close political and economic associations with

France and the United States damage his credibility as an anti-imperialist and weaken his strength and appeal in the process.

America is seen as pro-Establishment Islam, which can only hurt Bourguiba. The American-Israeli relationship is making all Muslims critical of the United States and is therefore weakening the legitimacy of Arab leaders who appear to be pro-American. Bourguiba, in response, is becoming increasingly critical of U.S. policy toward Israel [Ref. 20]. Such a message serves only to reinforce the appeal of Populist Islam.

It is probable that the Islamic movement will, if well-organized, influence the course of events in Tunisia in the coming years. What most supporters of the Islamic movement want is a return to the traditional values with which Arabs feel most comfortable. They oppose Westernization in the belief that it destroys moral values. It is not likely, however, that Tunisian moderates will permit the excesses carried out in the name of religion that have plagued some other Arab nations.

## V. THE STRATEGIC DIMENSION

### A. AN OVERVIEW

The economic and political interests of the United States in Tunisia are integral parts of the United States strategic posture in North Africa, the Middle East, and the Meditteranean Sea. The Tunisian connection is important to American policy planning for several areas and issues: naval strategy in the Mediterranean Sea; the Arab-Israeli conflict; the growing Libyan military threat; and the United States military presence in the region.

In spite of its small size and relatively small population and its underdeveloped economy, Tunisia is definitely involved in these areas and issues of American foreign policy. It is impossible to study a map of the region without becoming aware that any analysis of American long-range policy goals and options must take into consideration the presence and politics of Tunisia. The United States cannot afford to consider Tunisia a bit player in the North African/Middle East theater.

Any long-range strategy toward Tunisia must take into account several realities.

Tunisia's geographic location places it on the southern shore of a most important choke point between the eastern and western Mediterranean. The Straight of Sicily, barely 90 miles wide, is the primary route for travel by naval combatants and submarines from the Suez Canal or the Black Sea to the Straight of Gibraltar. Access to Tunisian naval and air facilities, then, is important to efficient monitoring of marine traffic through the Mediterranean.

Tunisia has little military strength of its own and, despite real efforts towards improvement, is not likely to become a formidable opponent for any of its neighbors. Tunisia's security will, for the forseeable future, depend upon outside assistance.

Tunisia's delicate internal political situation requires that U.S. policy consider potential changes in government in the near future. America cannot continue to depend upon the forgiving and pro-Western attitude of the current government.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1975, after nearly 10 years of inactivity, gives the Straight of Sicily fresh strategic significance. It is again an important route for shipment of Middle Eastern oil to Western Europe.

The transfer of large amounts of U.S. military equipment to Tunisia is causing America to be identified as a primary guarantor of Tunisian security. U.S. prestige would suffer in the case of a military defeat of Tunisia by Libya or Algeria.

## B. TUNISIA'S GEOPOLITICAL IMPORTANCE

The Mediterranean Sea has been of great significance as a transit route connecting the three continents which surround it. Its transportation role is enchanced by its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, the Black Sea and the Indian Ocean. Events which occur in any area of the Mediterranean basin are of importance throughout the region.

With the re-opening of the Suez Canal in 1975 (and the consequent resumption of oil shipping in the Mediterranean), the growing Soviet Black Sea fleet, and the increasing potential for terrorist actions against tourist ships, American interest in the Mediterranean is at its highest level since

World War II. The trend among North African and Middle Eastern nations in recent years, however, has been to reduce American military presence in favor of a more neutral Mediterranean policy. The U.S. has had naval visits reduced or eliminated in Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Greece and Turkey, while the Soviet naval presence has increased in Libya, Algeria and Syria. To compensate, an increased U.S. naval presence in Tunisia would be extremely desirable.

## C. TUNISIA'S MILITARY STRENGTH

Tunisia's defense forces consist of 35,100 personnel, or about 0.4 percent of the population. The Army, by far the largest service, has 30,000 men, 26,000 of whom are conscripts. The Navy's strength is 2,600, while the Air Force has 2,500. Paramilitary forces include 3,500 in the Gendarmerie and 6,000 in the National Guard [Ref. 21:p. 86]. Defense expenditures average less than 10 percent of Tunisia's national budget, and have never amounted to more than 4 percent of the Gross National Product [Ref. 15:p. 48]. Military personnel are a cross-section of the Tunisian society, socially stratified according to age, education, and socio-economic background.

Most recruits are draftees who did not get the easily attainable deferment. They serve for one year. In the army, they receive their basic training at the regiment in which they will serve. If they chose a military career, they will normally be assigned permanently to a regiment in their home region. About half of the recruits perform menial duties for their entire period of service, including tending the regimental sheep and orchards and constructing buildings in the regiment's area. [Ref. 22:pp. 610-11]

The noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are career soldiers. Currently, an age and experience gap divides the NCO corps into two groups: one older group that fought with the French and has little formal education; and one younger group with a higher educational level.

The officer corps is comprised of both careerists and draftees. The draftees generally serve one year as platoon commanders or as specialists in areas where the Army has shortages (such as doctors or engineers). Most of the draftees return eagerly to civilian occupations when their military service is completed. Career officer assignments are dictated by the Defense Ministry, with all key staff and field grade command appointments approved by President Bourguiba. Most post-independence career officers received their training overseas at France's Saint Cyr Academy or in the United States, although the Tunisian Military Academy at Fondouk Djedad is now producing some of its own officers. [Ref. 23:p. 586]

The career officer corps is, like the NCO corps, divided into two groups. Again, the older officers are less educated and more traditionally pro-Western.

Tunisia's military equipment is a mixture of old and new, most of it from Western countries. Combat aircraft, tanks, frigates and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) have been transferred from the United States; tanks, helocopters and naval vessels from France; artillery and patrol craft from Graet Britain; trainer aircraft, armored personnel carriers (APCs) and small arms from Italy; trainer aircraft and SAMs from Sweden; light tanks from Austria; and small arms from Belgium. Additionally, patrol boats were received from the People's Republic of China. [Ref. 23:p. 587]

Military financial aid is received from the United States and Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia had military trainees abroad in the U.S., France and Egypt. Tunisia does not export any military hardware, but there are reports that some arms have been provided to the PLO since that organization established its headquarters near Tunis in 1982 [Ref. 24:p. 214].

Appendix D contains tables of Tunisian military personnel and weapons.

## D. THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY

The Tunisian military forces are unique in the Arab world in that they are apolitical, very professional, and have never mounted a coup or fomented revolution against the government. The Tunisian military establishment, in President Bourguiba's view, should be primarily a school of civics to guarantee the survival of Tunisian nationalism. Until recently, the size and quality of armaments was limited in order to remove any temptation to intervene in affairs of state. The military is not permitted political associations. Bourguiba has carefully maintained the purity of the military and the military has, in return, been extremely loyal to him.

In all, the Tunisian military has admirably served its role as defender of Tunisia's national integrity and political stability. This is not to say, however, that there are no differences of opinion within the military or between the military and political leadership.

In January 1978, the Tunisian labor union called for a general strike and went into the streets of Tunis to protest the policies of the government. In its first internal supression role, the army quickly represseed the strike, but several people were killed (the official count is 47, but unofficial reports put the total as high as 200) [Ref. 9:p. 109].

In January 1980, a band of about 60 guerillas opened fire on the police station and military barracks in the central Tunisian mining town of Gafsa. Military forces were again called out, and it took several days and many casualties to overwhelm the rebels.

Since 1980, the military has been utilized in a police role during periods of university student and general civil unrest.

This increasing use of the army as a repressive force has created dissention between the junior and senior officer ranks. The senior officers, who have been with the regime since before independence, generally accept their role as protectors of Bourguiba's regime without question. The junior officers are beginning to look for alternatives that will satisfy the needs of Tunisia without adhering blindly to Bourguiba. The post-Bourguiba military is likely to rebel against being used for internal repression, and it will probably lose some of its hegemony in the face of resurgent Islamic fundamentalism, a critical examination of pro-Western values and differing attitudes toward the threat from Libya.

## E. THE U.S.-TUNISIAN MILITARY CONNECTION

The U.S.-Tunisian relationship in the past was built largely on American aid for Tunisia's economic development and on surplus food shipments. Between 1962 and 1979, the U.S. provided Tunisia with an average of $8 million per year in military aid but $38 million per year in food and economic aid [Ref. 4:p. 121]. After Reagan's election, however, foreign military sales (FMS) credits were multiplied from the 1981 budget amount of $15 million to $95 million in 1982 [Ref. 4:pp. 125-26]. The 1984 and 1985 FMS credits were $92 million and $50 million, respectively, with $52

million requested in the 1986 budget. U.S. military aid since 1982 is part of a program which could cost Tunisia more than $1 billion in the next few years for the purchase of F-5E fighters, M-60 tanks and anti-aircraft weaponry [Ref. 25].

In return, the United States is acquiring access to Tunisian air and naval facilities. The details of America's wartime access rights have been kept quiet, but the peacetime presence of Sixth Fleet ships in Tunisian ports is increasing annually. Some observers contend that Washington has obtained use of Tunisian airspace and ground facilities in the event of a Soviet-supported conflict involving Algeria, Libya, and Egypt [Ref. 14:p. 126]. Increased Soviet naval presence in Libya and Algeria, combined with the uncertain U.S. position in Egypt and Greece, makes standby facilities in Tunisia desirable.

While entering into military and economic agreements with the United States, Bourguiba has been careful to maintain his distance in public. He is even said to be considering a Soviet offer of arms that would match the American program, but Washington is not overly concerned about the possibility of Bourguiba accepting Moscow's proposal [Ref. 4:p. 130].

TABLE 3: UNITED STATES MILITARY AID TO TUNISIA
(UNIT: THOUSAND U.S. DOLLARS)

| | 1984 (Actual) | 1986 (Estimate) | 1986 (Budget) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Foreign Mil. Sales (Guar.) | 92,000 | 25,000 | 26,000 |
| Foreign Mil. Sales (Grant) | 0 | 25,000 | 27,000 |
| Mil. Assist. Program | 18,000 | 15,000 | 16,000 |
| Int'nat'l Mil. Educ. and Trng. | 1,621 | 1,550 | 1,700 |
| Total | 101,621 | 66,550 | 70,700 |

SOURCE: [Ref. 2:pp. 662, 669, 676]

## VI. TUNISIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

### A. TUNISIA'S NEIGHBORS

Tunisia's relationship with its neighbors is largely a function of their relations with each other. When Algeria and Libya move closer together politically, relations between each of them and Tunisia deteriorate. A rapprochement between Tunisia and either one of its neighbors tends to isolate the other. In this political climate, Tunisia is very concerned about which way its neighbors are drifting.

#### 1. Libya

The issue of Bourguiba's successor is closely connected with the debate over how closely to align the Tunisian government with the United States. American military aid is seen as a show of support for Bourguiba, so his opposition can be expected to take an anti-U.S. platform. Important to the question of how much aid to accept from Washington is the Tunisian perception of the threat posed by Libya's Colonel Qadhafi.

The 1980 insurgency in Gafsa was blamed to a large extent on Libya. Several border incidents and a few small Tunisian uprisings have been perpetrated by Libya since then. More recently, in September 1985, reports from Cairo indicate that a coup in Libya was attempted in response to Qadhafi directing his army and air force to invade Tunisia [Ref. 26].

Libyan designs on Tunisia are uncertain, but Qadhafi has considerable potential for causing further trouble. About 50,000 Tunisians are employed in Libya, although 27,000 more were recently expelled (Tunisia evicted 283 purported Libyan spies and broke off diplomatic relations in response) [Ref. 27]. Additionally, Qadhafi is giving military training to an estimated 5,000

Tunisians, ostensibly to prepare them to liberate Palestine, but perhaps to liberate Tunisia instead [Ref. 13:p. 60]. When returned to Tunisia, these military personnel will be in a good position to stir up internal dissention on Qadhafi's behalf, if they are so inclined.

Qadhafi, if reports of his recent failed attempt to invade Tunisia are correct, is not likely to launch another attempt soon. He faces growing unrest at home and his position with the Organization of African Unity is questionable. He has already earned the disapproval of most African states for his adventure in Chad and his stance on the Western Sahara issue, and a military takeover of Tunisia would probably lead to political isolation.

After two brief mergers with Libya in the early 1970s, relations between Tunisia and Libya became strained over several issues. In the mid-1970s, Libya opposed Tunisia's policy on the Western Sahara and began expelling several thousand Tunisian workers. Soon thereafter, Bourguiba announced the arrest of a Libya hit team sent to kill top Tunisian officials. Bourguiba later claimed that Libya was providing military training for opponents of his regime [Ref. 10:p. 212]. Relations between the two countries were further strained by a disagreement over the maritime territorial boundaries in 1977.

2. Algeria

Tunisia's relationship with Algeria is basically one of mutual mistrust. Tunisia contributed significantly to the Algerian war of independence, but the two countries had a dispute over territory soon after Algeria's independence was achieved. Through the 1960s, both countries harbored opponents of the other's regimes, but formal political and economic relations

were generally friendly. A mutual desire to prevent superpower control of the Mediterranean Sea led to a series of agreements in the 1970s. [Ref. 10:p. 213]

Algeria, however, considers the disposition of Tunisia a matter of basic security. An independent Tunisia is tolerable, but a Tunisia controlled by Libya would be a serious threat to Algeria's struggle for supremacy in North Africa. Algeria would prefer to control Tunisia in order to utilize it as a buffer zone against Libya aggression. Tunisia, aware of its precarious situation, has adopted a policy of rapprochment with Algeria. A 1983 pact of friendship and cooperation between Algiers and Tunis warmed relations officially, but Tunisia remains wary of Algerian intentions. Some commercial agreements, including an arrangement for an Algerian oil pipeline to cross Tunisian territory, have been signed, and Algeria is among the largest suppliers of tourist income for Tunisia.

## B. THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Tunisia has been a consistent supporter of the rights of Palestinian Arabs, but the Bourguibist idea of how Palestinians should achieve autonomy differs significantly from the prevailing Arab view. Bourguiba appears to the West to be a moderate on the Palestine issue.

In 1947, Tunisia advocated acceptance of the United Nations resolution which sanctioned the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. Although this concept was initially rejected by all other Arab states, it has since become central to many of the peace plans proposed by Arab leaders. In 1965, after a tour of Palestinian refugee camps in other Arab countries, Bourguiba called upon the Arabs to negotiate a settlement with Israel. He

believed that the Arabs could not win a conventional war with Israel because of its American support. He offered the case of Tunisia's struggle for independence, in which a step-by-step method was employed, as an example for the Palestinians to follow. Bourguiba also made clear his view that only the Palestinian Arabs themselves could determine their future, assisted, but not dominated, by other Arab countries. [Ref. 10:pp. 214-15]

The gap between Tunisia and the other Arab countries was closed when Tunisia organized a military force to fight with the Arabs in the June 1967 war. The Tunisian force did not see action, but the gesture was appreciated. In the October 1973 war, Tunisia contributed a small military contingent, medical teams and other material assistance to the Arab cause. His commitment to a negotiated settlement, however, was unchanged.

Tunisia joined the other Arab nations in condemning the 1979 Egypt-Israeli peace treaty as damaging to Arab unity.

Bourguiba has consistently condemned attacks on the PLO by any party. In July 1973, he called on King Hussein to relinquish his throne and convert Jordan to a Palestinian state. In 1976 he criticized Syria for attacking PLO units in Lebanon. The 1978 and 1982 Israeli attacks on PLO bases and civilian refugee camps were strongly denounced by Bourguiba. With the encouragement of the United States, Bourguiba offered Tunis as a new headquarters for the PLO after its forced evacuation from Beirut in September 1982.

Since 1982, Tunisia has reportedly provided the PLO with some material and weapons support [Ref. 24:p. 214], but still has not changed its basic view of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Even the Israeli raid against the PLO

headquarters near Tunis on October 1, 1985, which killed several Tunisian civilians and outraged the general population, did not change the official Tunisian advocacy of exchanging peace for return of occupied territories [Ref. 20].

## C. THE ARAB LEAGUE

The League of Arab States, or Arab League, is the most general organization for inter-Arab cooperation. It is a loose association of Arab states which grew out of a series of World War II proposals for Arab unity [Ref. 3:p. 198]. Membership has grown over the years to the present 21 member states. Palestine is considered an independent state by the League and the PLO, as its official representative, was given full membership status in 1974 [Ref. 28]. The Arab League headquarters was "temporarily" withdrawn from Cairo and established in Tunis following the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

Decisions and agreements by the Arab League carry little weight, as they are binding only to the members that accept them. Expulsion from the league or action against aggression does not require the approval of the state against which it is directed. Amendments to the pact require only a two-thirds vote, but an objecting member may withdraw from the organization at any time. [Ref. 3:p. 198]

The primary value of the Arab League is as a forum for discussion of matters that affect the Arab world as a whole in order to give the appearance of unity of thought. Individual state sovereignty, however, is a principle that is enshrined in the pact. [Ref. 3:p. 198]

Tunisia did not join the Arab League until 1958, and then it boycotted league meetings until 1961 because of a dispute with Egypt. With the Arab League, Tunisia has generally allied itself with the conservative oil states. The relocation of the Arab League headquarters to Tunis has given Tunisia increased visibility and prestige in the league, although its official status remains as before. The Secretary General of the League, elected for a five-year term in 1980, is Tunisian Chedli Klibi [Ref. 3:p. 199].

## D. WESTERN EUROPE

Tunisia's historical, cultural and economic ties to Western Europe, especially he southern countries, are extensive. Tunisia, as a Mediterranean state, considers its security to be closely linked to the security of Western Europe.

### 1. France

Tunisia's closest ties to Europe are with its former colonial power. Bourguiba's efforts to achieve independence under friendly terms were frustrated by his desire to aid Algeria in its struggle against France, but the break in Franco-Tunisian relations was soon repaired. Except for some crises of short duration, relations with France have remained very positive.

Tunisia receives economic aid from France,[5] and most of Tunisia's military hardware is of French origin. Tunisia sends some military personnel to France for training.

---

[5]In 1982, France donated 1.5% of its Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds to Tunisia, equalling $6.05 million of France's ODA total of $4.034 billion [Ref. 29].

In 1983, France was Tunisia's second largest market for exports (behind the United States), and France remains the largest supplier of Tunisian imports [Ref. 1:p. 587].

The French language still prevails for commerce and diplomacy, causing France's influence in Tunisia to remain strong. Tunisian diplomats and political leaders, because of their education and intellectual orientation, tend to be sympathetic to French foreign policy. Commercially, the strong link between language and trade facilitates the marketing of French products in Tunisia.

2. Italy

The Italy-Tunisia relationship has had its problems. The two countries are competing with some of the same products (especially olive oil) for European markets, but Italy is given preferential treatment. Arguments over fishing rights in the Strait of Sicily, assaults on Tunisian laborers in Italy, and the involvement of an Italian oil rig in a Tunisian-Libyan maritime border dispute have further damaged relations. Several commercial and diplomatic agreements do exist between the two countries, however, and they have a number of security interests in common. On the whole, relations between Tunisia and Italy are cordial, if not especially friendly. [Ref. 10:p. 218]

E. THE UNITED STATES

Tunisian-American relations have been consistently cordial since Tunisia achieved indepedence, due largely to the substantial amounts of economic and military aid which Tunisia receives from the United States. President

Bourguiba, mindful of his need for a strong ally, has been careful not to endanger the U.S.-Tunisian friendship.

Tunisia does not subscribe to the prevailing Third World opinion that the United States is an imperialist power. It believes that America is a necessary party to any Arab-Israeli peace negotiations because only the United States can be persuasive with Israel. In this regard, President Bourguiba is disappointed in America's continued strong support of Israeli policies. He has urged the U.S. to talk directly with the PLO. In spite of the disagreement over the Arab-Israeli issue, however, official relations between America and Tunisia are very close.

Even the October 1985 Israeli attack on PLO headquarters in Tunisia, and the subsequent announcement by Washington that Israel's action was a "legitimate response," did little to harm Tunisia's official policy toward the United States. The Bourguiba government called the raid "a positive test of Tunisia's international policy, since the earthquake which shook U.S.-Tunisia relations rocked the building but left its foundation intact". [Ref. 20]

## F. COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

### 1. The Soviet Union

Tunisia did not establish relations with the USSR until 1960, when Bourguiba became disappointed with NATO policies. Since then, the Soviet Union has provided Tunisia substantial economic and technical assistance,[6]

---

[6]Most of the Soviet aid has been for water development projects. A dam on the Mejerda River was built using $55 million of 1976 credits. Total Soviet aid to Tunisia for the period 1954-1978 was $96 million (compared to $716 million for Algeria). [Ref. 30:pp. 7, 21]

and Tunisia provided the use of harbor facilities at Bizerte to Soviet ships in return. Despite fundamental ideological differences and a 1973 Tunisian accusation of Soviet espionage activity, relations between the two countries have remained generally good.

Since the late 1970s, Tunisia has become concerned over the increased Soviet presence in the Mediterranean Sea. As a show of dissatisfaction, and in response to a request by the United States, permission to use Tunisian ship repair facilities in Bizerte was withdrawn. [Ref. 10:p. 219]

The Soviet Union has no military technicians or advisors in Tunisia, nor do Tunisian military personnel train in the Soviet Union. Some Tunisian academic students are trained in the Soviet Union. [Ref. 30:p. 17]

2. China

Tunisia maintains diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China. Tunisia refuses to get involved in the Sino-Soviet dispute, preferring to remain on cordial terms with both countries. Tunisia has received some aid from China[7] and has purchased two gunboats from the PRC. [Ref. 10:p. 219]

3. Others

Tunisia has good relations with many communist countries in Eastern Europe and Asia. In 1984, Tunis had diplomatic ties with Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Vietnam. Tunisian ties with communist countries, while not close, have resulted in numerous

---

[7]Total Chinese aid for the period 1954-1978 was $40 million, all in 1972. Additionally, China is constructing the Mejerda-Cap Bon canal under $90 million of Chinese agreements. [Ref. 30:p. 7]

commercial and technical agreements. Tunisia received a total of $210 million in economic aid from Eastern European communist countries during the period 1954-1978 [Ref. 30:p. 7].

## VII. UNITED STATES POLICY GOALS AND OPTIONS

United States interests in Tunisia are diverse and complicated. In light of recent events, the historical American-Tunisian relationship must now be re-evaluated and faced squarely by U.S. policy planners. Further, American policy in Tunisia must be communicated to and understoood by Tunisian officials if we intend that Tunisian actions will be based in part on the response they will bring from Washington. Once announced, American policy must be followed consistently in order to build and sustain confidence that Washington in fact knows what its interests are.

American long-range policy goals in Tunisia fall into the three broad categories discussed previously in this study; economic, political and strategic. Policy goals and options must not, of course, be treated as one all-encompassing entity. For the purposes of this study, however, American interests will first be separated into the three broad dimensions. Overall American policy will be reviewed in the concluding chapter.

### A. THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The United States believes that a strong and economically viable Tunisia will be a force of stability in an unstable region. Tunisia considers itself a model for the Third World of how an undeveloped country, with Western assistance, can reach a respectable level of economic performance. Both countries are aware that Tunisia, as a presentable example of how American support can enhance a nation's economic experience, improves the international image of the United States. Tunisia has never acted as an

American satellite, but the United States finds itself nevertheless compelled to support Tunisia. America's economic goal in Tunisia is the same as Tunisia's own goal--that of a strong and self-sustaining economy.

The United States benefits little from close economic ties to Tunisia. Except for phosphates and a very limited amount of oil, Tunisia has little that America needs or wants. Any American economic involvement with Tunisia is likely to be extremely one-sided.

Tunisia's own economic interest lies in developing its industrial sector. It has become evident that Tunisia cannot finance its own development under current world and regional economic conditions, so it must solicit aid and investment from outside sources. The Arab Gulf states and the West, especially the United States, are Tunisia's most likely benefactors.

The United States can best assist Tunisia by providing both aid for development and markets for Tunisia's products. Tunisia is not now on the list of countries with priority for assistance because the per capita income exceeds one thousand dollars annually, but it is obvious that Tunisia needs economic aid. Tunisian debt payments are already more than the affordable limit, so American aid is best extended in the form of grants through the Economic Support Fund (ESF) and Food for Peace (P.L. 480-I/II) programs. U.S. economic and food aid (including Peace Corps) programmed in recent years ($19.2 million total in 1984, $27.2 million in 1985, and $26.5 million in 1986) is substantial but not huge [Ref. 2:p. 662, 669, 676]. It does little to make up for the annual trade deficit of over a billion dollars.

Tunisia, in its continuing search for real independence, desires to lessen its economic dependence upon the United States. Relations between the two

countries, in the Tunisian view, should not be "in terms of material interests but on the highest level of responsibility" [Ref. 20] in order to give Tunisia more influence in its dealings with Washington and permit greater freedom of action. Tunisia realizes, however, that acheiving economic independence is not possible without a good deal of aid along the way.

American economic options in Tunisia are few. In order to assist Tunisia without contributing to the undesirable condition of economic dependence, the flow of development aid must continue. The primary question is: how much aid is enough without being too much? The current level is certainly inadequate, and it is probable that Tunis would willingly accept a substantially higher amount. Further, whatever amount is provided must be reasonably consistent from year to year (money is spent most efficiently when it can be included in budget planning) and it must be provided without attached "strings." Attempts to exchange economic assistance for political compliance are likely to be rejected out of principle, with destructive effects for both parties.

## B. THE POLITICAL DIMENSION

Despite much debate over specific American interests in North Africa and the Middle East, there is general agreement on broad American policy goals; limiting Soviet influence, maintaining regional peace, supporting Israel, and promoting economic and social development. The American political relationship with Tunisia must be developed within the framework of these basic goals.

U.S. political goals in Tunisia are: an independent and secure Tunisia; continuation of Tunisia's moderate policies in Arab affairs; enhancement of

America's political image in Tunisia and the North Africa/Middle East region. America's real political interest in Tunisia lies in the fact that a strong U.S.-Tunisia relationship will bolster America's image in other moderate Arab countries.

American policy in Tunisia must be rational, intelligent and enduring. The uncertainty over who will replace President Bourguiba means that U.S. policy must be flexible enough to adapt to whatever changes in leadership occur. America must avoid a heavy-handed approach to Tunisia as any high-profile policy is likely to be counterproductive.

Four important political considerations must be made in developing U.S. policy toward Tunisia. First, the United States and Tunisia are fundamentally opposed over America's support of Israel in the Arab-Israeli conflict, with little chance of either country changing its basic viewpoint on the issue. Second, the United States is unlikely to have any real influence over who emerges as Bourguiba's successor. Third, any perceived involvement by the United States in Tunisia's internal affairs will play into the hands of anti-American factions. Fourth, the U.S. position in Tunisia was badly damaged by Washington's initial approval of Israel's October 1985 air strike against the PLO headquarters near Tunis. Officially, however, Tunis seeks to mend the relationship because it recognizes America's unique ability to assist in the modernization of Tunisia.

American political options in Tunisia are few. Washington must ally itself with Tunisia whenever possible, and must avoid appearing to treat Tunisia as a subordinate nation. Tunisia recognizes that it is not a major

voice in world events, but considers itself too important to be ignored in any treatment of North African or Middle Eastern affairs.

American promises, once made, must be kept. In June 1985, during a visit by Bourguiba to Washington, President Reagan pledged American backing for Tunisia's security and territorial integrity[8]. Less than four months later, Reagan publicly approved of a violation of Tunisia's territorial integrity by Israel[9]. Although the original pledge had been made in the face of threatening Libyan, and not Israeli, activity, the damage to America's political credibility was significant.

Many Tunisians still feel that Libya is Tunisia's most immediate threat, but they resent American actions which further widen the Tunisia-Libya gap. The United States must not attempt to use Tunisia as a base for anti-Libyan activity, but the pledge to assist Tunisia in the event of Libyan aggression must be honored.

---

[8]At the time of Bourguiba's visit, President Reagan said that the United States "remains firmly committed to the sanctity of Tunisia's territorial integrity and to the principle of non-interference in its internal affairs." He also said that "Tunisia can rely on the close friendship and cooperation of the United States." [Ref. 32]

[9]Immediately following the 1 October 1985 Israeli air strike against PLO headquarters near Tunis, President Reagan called the raid "a legitimate response and an expression of self-defense." [Ref. 32] On the following day, the White House called the raid "understandable as an expression of self-defense," but said "such acts of violence are contrary to our overall objective of a peaceful, stable, Middle East and cannot be condoned." [Ref. 33] Later the U.S. abstained from a United Nations Security Council vote to condemn the raid and sent Undersecretary of State John Whitehead to Tunisia to mend damaged relations.

C. THE STRATEGIC DIMENSION

Strategically, Tunisia is of increasing importance to the United States. Its geographic location in relation to Mediterranean Sea routes and to the rest of the troubled North Africa/Middle East region ensure that the U.S. has a long-term interest in maintaining access to Tunisian naval and air facilities. The uncertainty over who will succeed President Bourguiba and his PSD, however, makes the question of how strongly the U.S. should pursue close ties a difficult one. The struggle between pro-Western factions and their anti-American opponents may come to a head over the issue of U.S. military aid.

The real strategic goals of the United States in Tunisia are few. They are:

(1) To obtain and maintain increased access to Tunisian naval and air facilities;

(2) To deny the use of Tunisian facilities to the Soviet Union;

(3) To enhance regional stability by deterring Libyan and/or Algerian aggression.

All of the above goals are best accomplished by a close U.S.-Tunisian military relationship. The Tunisian armed forces are now woefully inadequate to repulse a large-scale invasion of their national territory. They lack enough fighter aircraft, tanks and transport aircraft to meaningfully engage an invading force in the skies or on the ground. With no modern air defense network in place in Tunisia, the enemy would probably have both strategic and tactical surprise. Building a modern and powerful fighting

force capable of countering a large invasion force, however, is far beyond the means of the Tunisian economy.

With little ability to defend itself, Tunisia has effectively placed its national security in the hands of its largest and most powerful ally, the United States. Tunisia knows that it will not become a major power in the region and does not intend to try. In the words of an official Tunisian spokesman, "Small and medium size countries which play at using military force have all failed, because the military strength does not belong to them. One can at most resort to it to support political and moral strength". [Ref. 20]

What Tunisia does want militarily is a force strong enough to discourage small-scale "adventures" into Tunisian territory by its neighbors. Even this limited military objective requires a more effective fighting force than Tunisia now has. The United States must be willing to Tunisia provide Tunisia with increased military assistance in order to retain its position as the primary guarantor of Tunisian security.

In recognition of Tunisia's existing economic burdens, American military aid should be provided free of charge or sold under generous terms. The 1981/1982 American policy of selling arms as part of a program which obligates the Tunisians to increased purchases in future years should be abandoned.

American military assistance and weapons should be part of an agreement which guarantees access by the United States to Tunisian naval and air facilities in time of need. The American military presence in Tunisia should be strictly limited, however, under normal conditions. Training of

Tunisian military personnel should be conducted to the extent possible in the United States. Combined U.S.-Tunisian military exercises should occur frequently, but in a low-profile manner. Visits to Tunisian ports by ships of the American Sixth Fleet should occur no more often than quarterly, and their crews should be encouraged to conduct as many civil action projects as possible when in port.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Tunisia is not, and is not likely to become in the near future, a burning issue for Amreican policy makers. Its importance in North African and Middle Eastern regional affairs is, however, increasing. The policies America has followed for the past several years are no longer appropriate.

For the American-Tunisian relationship to function effectively and predictably, it must be based on a mutual understanding of the long-range interests of each country. As individual and independent nations, both the United States and Tunisia will act to maximize their own national interests. This study has attempted to show that, despite some irreconcilable differences, the two countries have several important interests in common. The mutual interests can best be served in an atmosphere of clearly and openly defined policies.

Tunisia is the smallest country in the region, endowed with few natural resources but inhabited by people who have a realistic and relatively modern attitude towards life. By catering to Western investment and tourism, they have created an economy that serves as a model for developing nations. The population is more cosmopolitan than that in most Arab countries because of its long exposure to foreign influences.

Modern-day Tunisa is largely the creation of one man, Habib Bourguiba. Since he led the nation to independence in 1956, he has ruled with such complete authority that his regime has been called a "presidential monarchy." [Ref. 10:p. 183] The economic successes and political stability

that Tunisia has experienced over the past 30 years are due mostly to Bourguiba's vision and leadership.

Bourguiba's authority is implemented by his Destourian Socialist Party (PSD), led now by essentially the same men who were at Bourguiba's side during the struggle for independence. This aging group has lost much of its appeal, especially among the young people who see their opportunities for advancement as limited. Bourguiba himself, the charismatic folk hero who was revered by his countrymen for so many years, is becoming too feeble at age 82 to maintain a firm grip on the nation.

Tunisia's one-party government, considered by many to be an ideal blend of socialism and democracy, officially came to an end in 1981, when opposition parties were allowed for the first time to present candidates for elected office. Restrictions on the publishing of opposition newspapers were eased at about the same time. In spite of the apparently freer political climate, however, suppression of real opposition continued that the one-party system endured in practice.

Habib Bourguiba, in spite of his weakening mental and physical condition, will remain the dominant political figure in Tunisia until he dies or hands over his presidency. The constitution directs the transfer of power to his prime minister, Muhammed Mzali, but it is unlikely that Mzali will be permitted to assume the presidency without a fight. The opposition, both inside and outside the PSD, is already lining up its support for the power struggle that is sure to take place.

Whoever emerges on top will undoubtedly adopt a stance that is less pro-Western than was Bourguiba's. Tunisia can be expected to align itself

more with mainstream Arab political views, taking a stronger stand against the United States-Israel partnership in the process. The interests that Tunisia shares with the United States, however, will not be affected by the change of leadership. Despite some predicitions of a Lebanon-like turmoil following Bourguiba's death, it is unlikely that the Tunisian people will permit a long or violent period of power transition. Although they may incorporate more Islamic values into their daily lives, they are also unlikely to abandon their basic Western orientation. Whoever leads Tunisia after Bourguiba will find himself inextricably connected to the United States--economically, politically and militarily.

Tunisia's only neighbors are Algeria and Libya. Algeria is greatly superior militarily due to its much larger population and oil income. It has close military ties to the Soviet Union. Libya is also superior in military strength to Tunisia, by virtue of oil revenues which have permitted huge expenditures on military equipment. Both Algeria and Libya are ideologiacally far to the left of Tunisia and far more committed to the pan-Arab cause. Although both nations have been perceived as real threats to Tunisia, the possibilty of a serious military clash is small. An interesting aspect of this situation is that seemingly natural alliances in the Maghreb--pro-Western Tunisia and Morocco, and leftist Algeria and Libya--have not occurred. The current alliances are Tunisia/Algeria and Libya/Morocco, although political alliances in North Africa should not be taken too seriously.

In order for the relationship between the United States and post-Bourguiba Tunisia to be meaningful and enduring, a number of prerequisites must be present:

(1) An American understanding of Tunisian society and sensitivity toward regional and Arab concerns;

(2) Development in Tunisia of a government system that prevents agreements from becoming the personal projects of one dominant individual;

(3) Regional peace;

(4) Increased participation by Tunisia in the international economy;

(5) Open communication between the two countries regarding the national interests and foreign policies of each.

The issue over which the United States and Tunisia are currently most greatly at odds is certainly the Arab-Israeli conflict. The two counties were able to play down this issue in their bilateral relations as long as Tunisia was not directly involved in the conflict, but the Israel air strike on PLO headquarters near Tunis has brought Tunisia dramatically into that war. How the United States deals with the Arab-Israeli issue in Tunisia now will be critical to the role America plays in the search for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Because the United States counts both Tunisia and Israel among its best friends in the Mediterranean region, it must avoid isolating one in favor of the other. Only an even-handed policy, carefully maintaining good relations with both countries, will permit America to gain and maintain credibility as a serious negotiating power. The historical Tunisian view of how the Arab-Israeli conflict should be approached is actually in substantial agreement with the U.S. view, and Tunisia remains a potential ally of the U.S. in this matter.

The United States has important and complex interests in North Africa and the Middle East. Positive American relations with Tunisia can contribute

significantly toward promoting those interests. If developed with courage and far-sightedness, United States policy in Tunisia will enhance the American image, satisfy strategic goals, and ultimately improve the chances for a peaceful resolution of the Palestine question.

## APPENDIX A: COUNTRY DATA

### Government

Official Name of State: Republic of Tunisia
Type of Government: Republic
Head of State: President-for-Life Habib Bourguiba (also Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces)
Head of Government: Prime Minister Mohammed Mzali
Defense Minister: Salah ad-Din Bali
Chief of Staff of Armed Forces: Major-General Mohammed Gzara
Local Divisions: 21 Governorates
Flag: Rectangular red field with a white circular portion in center; a red crescent and a red five-point star within the white area

### People

Population: 6.9 million
Population Density: 42 per sq. km. (109 per sq. mi.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Age Distribution: | 0-14 | 43.3% |
| | 15-59 | 50.9% |
| | over 59 | 5.8% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ethnic Subdivisions: | Arabs/Berbers | 96.0% |
| | Europeans | 0.8% |
| | Others | 3.2% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Religious Subdivisions: | Sunni Muslims | 95.7% |
| | Roman Catholics | 0.6% |
| | Other Christians | 0.2% |
| | Others | 3.5% |

Languages:
Official - Arabic
Commercial - French, Arabic

## Geography

Area: 63,362 sq. mi. (163,610 sq. km.)
Capital: Tunis
Time: GMT +1
Cities: Tunis (1,200,000 population)
Sfax (475,000 population)

## Economy

Industries: Food Processing
Textiles
Oil products
Construction materials
Tourism

Chief Crops: Grains/cereals
Dates
Olives
Citrus fruits

Minerals: Phosphates
Iron
Oil
Lead
Zinc

Oil Reserves (1980): 2.25 billion barrels
Arable Land: 30 percent
Labor Force: 35% agriculture
22% industry
11% service

## Finance

Currency: Tunisian Dinar ($1 U.S. = .71 dinar in March 1984)
Gross National Product(1982): $8.4 billion
Per Capita Income (1982): $1,200

Imports (1983): $3.1 billion

| Partners: | | |
|---|---|---|
| | France | 26% |
| | Italy | 15% |
| | W. Germany | 11% |

Exports (1983): $1.8 billion

| Partners: | | |
|---|---|---|
| | U.S. | 23% |
| | France | 19% |
| | Italy | 17% |
| | W. Ger. | 10% |

Transport

Motor Vehicles in Use (1982): 141,000 passenger cars
141,000 commercial vehicles

Chief Ports: Tunis, Sfax, Bizerte

Communications

Television sets in use (1981): 300,000
Radios in use (1982): 1,000,000
Telephones in use (1981): 188,000
Daily newspaper circulation (1982): 49 per 1,000 population

Education (1982)

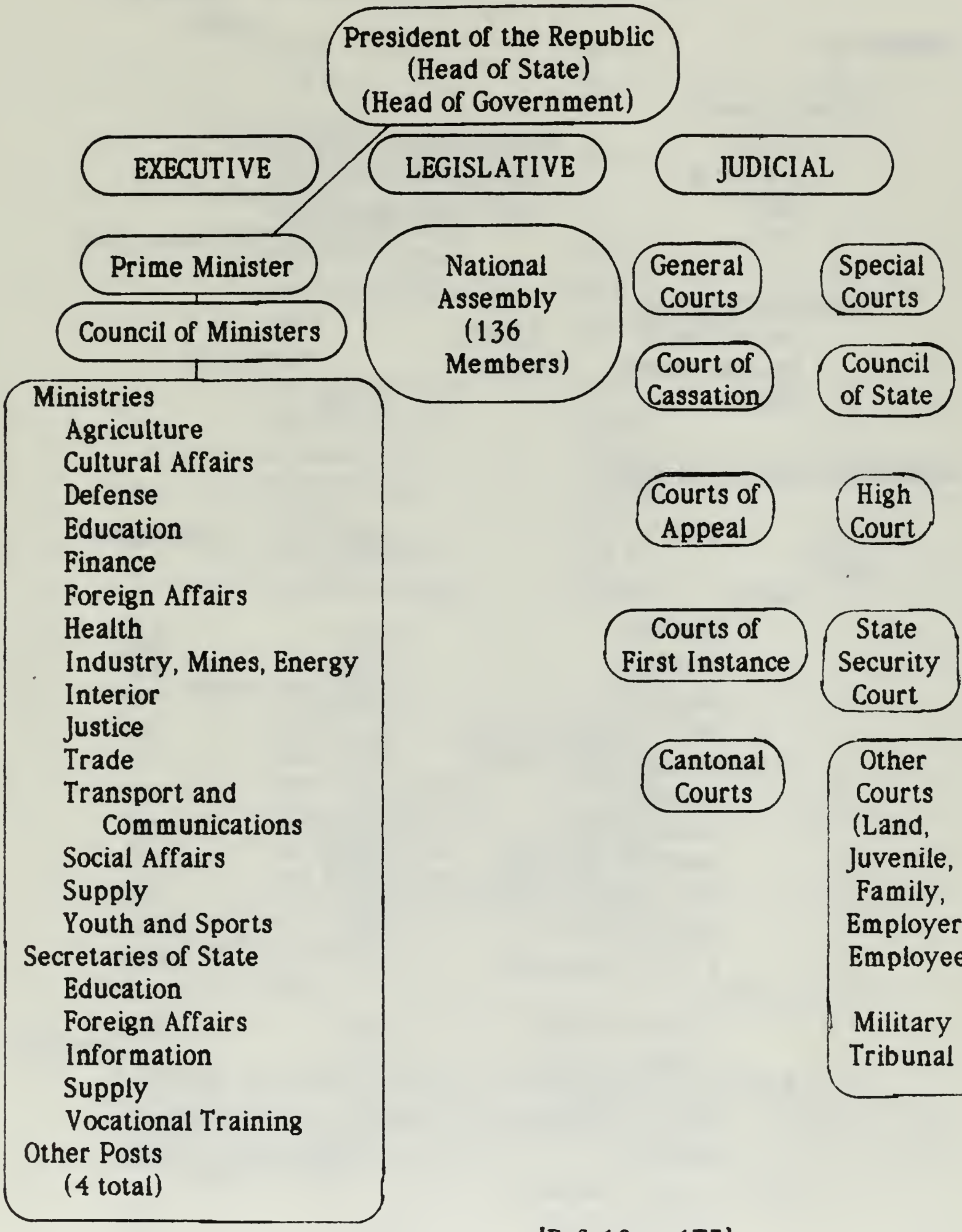
Literacy: 62%
Years education compulsory: 8
Attendance: 85%

Sources:

1. The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1985, Newspaper Enterprise Association, 1984
2. Tunisia: A Country Study, American University Press, 1979

# APPENDIX B: MAP OF TUNISIA

## APPENDIX C: GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE




[Ref. 10:p. 175]

## APPENDIX D: MILITARY STRENGTH

### Manpower

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Military forces: | | | |
| | Army | 30,000 (26,000 conscripts) | |
| | Air Force | 2,500 (500 conscripts) | |
| | Navy | 2,600 (500 conscripts) | |
| | TOTAL | | 35,100 (27,000 conscripts) |
| Paramilitary forces: | | | |
| | Gendarmerie | 3,500 | |
| | National Guard | 6,000 | |
| | TOTAL | | 9,500 |

### Equipment (Major Weapons)

| | Type | Origin | In Inventory |
|---|---|---|---|
| ARMY | | | |
| | Tanks | | |
| | M-60A3 | U.S.A. | 54 |
| | M-48A5 | U.S.A. | 14 |
| | AMX-13 | France | 55 |
| | M-41 Walker Bulldog | U.S.A. | 20 |
| | Armored Cars (APCs/ARVs) | | |
| | Saladin | U.K. | 20 |
| | Panhard EBR-75 | France | 30 |
| | Panhard AML-60 | France | 10 |
| | M-113/M-125/M-577 | U.S.A. | 60 |
| | Fiat OTO-6614 | Italy | 110 |
| | V-150 Commando | U.S.A. | a few |
| | Artillery | | |
| | 155mm M-109 | U.S.A. | 20 |
| | 105mm M-101 | U.S.A. | 50 |
| | Anti-Tank Weapons | | |
| | BGM-71A TOW | U.S.A. | 100 |
| | MILAN | France/FRG/U.K. | some |
| | Anti-Aircraft Weapons | | |
| | Chaparral SAM | U.S.A. | 30 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| AIR FORCE | | |
| Fighters | | |
| F-86F | U.S.A. | 10 |
| F-5E/F-5F | U.S.A. | 12 |
| Ground Attack | | |
| Aermacchi MB-326B | Italy | 15 |
| Transports | | |
| C-130H Hercules | U.S.A. | 4 |
| MD-315 Flamant | France | 3 |
| Aeritalia G222 | Italy | 3 |
| Other | France/Italy | 4 |
| Helicopters | | |
| 500MD Defender | U.S.A. | 4 |
| Sud Alouette II | France | 7 |
| Alouette III | France | 5 |
| SA330 Puma | France | 1 |
| AB-205 | Italy | 18 |
| UH-1N Bell 212 | U.S.A. | 4 |
| AS-350-Ecureuil | France | 6 |
| NAVY | | |
| Combatant Craft | | |
| Frigate | U.S.A. | 1 |
| Patrol Ship | U.S.A. | 2 |
| Large Patrol Craft | France | 4 |
| Coastal Patrol Craft | France | 10 |
| Fast Attack Craft, Missile | France | 3 |
| Fast Attack Craft, Patrol | U.K. | 2 |
| Fast Attack Craft, Gun | China | 2 |
| Auxiliary Craft | | |
| Tugs | | 3 |

Sources


1. Tunisia: A Country Study, American University Press, 1979
2. The Middle East Military Balance, 1984, Tel Aviv University, 1984
3. The Military Balance, 1985-86, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1985

## LIST OF REFERENCES


1. Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc., The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1984, New York: Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc.,1983.

2. Agency for International Development, Congressional Presentation, Fiscal Year 1986, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985.

3. Europa Publications Limited, The Middle East and North Africa 1984-85, London: Europa Publications Limited, 1984.

4. Wright, Claudia, "Tunisia: Next Friend to Fall?" Foreign Policy, No. 46, Spring, 1982.

5. Knapp, Wilfrid, North West Africa: A Political and Economic Survey, London: Oxford University Press, 1977.

6. Ling, Dwight L., Tunisia: From Protectorate to Republic, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1967.

7. Micaud, Charles A., Tunisia: The Politics of Modernization, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1964.

8. Ware, L. B. , "The Role of the Tunisian Military in the Post-Bourguiba Era," The Middle East Journal, Vol. 39, No. 1, Winter, 1985.

9. Lawless, Richard and Findlay, Allan, eds., North Africa: Contemporary Politics and Economic Development, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984.

10. American University, Foreign Area Studies, Tunisia, A Country Study, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979.

11. Middle East Review Company, Inc., Middle East Review 1985, Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc., 1984.

12. Moore, Richard, Fodor's North Africa 1985, p. 283, New York: Fodor's Travel Guides, 1984.

13. Parker, Richard B., North Africa: Regional Tensions and Strategic Concerns. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1984.

14. Africa Confidential, p. 5, London: Miramoor Publications, Ltd., 3 July 1985.

15. U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1972-1982, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984.

16. Zartman, I. William, Political Elites in Arab North Africa, New York: Longman Inc., 1982.

17. Africa Research Bulletin, pp. 7644-45, 15 June 1985.

18. Wilkinson, Ben, "Contenders for Power in Post-Bourguiba Era Viewed," p. 43, The Middle East, August 1985.

19. Bill, James A., "Resurgent Islam in the Persian Gulf," Foreign Affairs, Vol, 63, No. 1, Fall, 1984.

20. La Presse (Tunis), 26 October 1985.

21. International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 1985-1986, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1985.

22. Copley, Gregory R., Defense and Foreign Affairs Handbook: 1984, Washington, D.C.: Copley and Associates, 1984.

23. Keegan, John, ed., World Armies, second edition, Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1983.

24. Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, The Middle East Military Balance 1984, Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1984.

25. Schissel, Howard, "Facing a Future Without Bourguiba," Africa Report, November - December 1984.

26. New York Times, 2 September 1985.

27. New York Times, 27 September 1985.

28. Laqueur, Walter and Rubin, Barry, eds., The Israel-Arab Reader, New York: Penguin Books, 1984.

29. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Cooperation 1984 Review, p. 230, Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1984.

30. National Foreign Assessment Center, Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries 1978, National Foreign Assessment Center, 1979.

31. New York Times, 27 August 1985.

32. New York Times, 2 October 1985.

33. New York Times, 3 October 1985.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY


Al-Marayati, Abid A. International Relations of the Middle East and North Africa. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1984.

Blackburn, Peter. "Tunisia Blames Libya for the Night Attack." Middle East Economic Digest. 1 February 1980.

Cooley, John K. Libyan Sandstorm: The Complete Account of Qaddafi's Revolution. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982.

Entelis, John. Comparative Politics of North Africa: Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1980.

Gallagher, Charles F. The United States and North Africa. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963.

Hahn, Lorna. "Time of Trouble in Tunisia." The New Leader. 23 October 1978.

Hermassi, Elbaki. Leadership and National Development in North Africa. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972.

Hudson, Michael C. Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977.

Kaplan, Robert D. "Turmoil in Tunisia." The New Republic. 26 March 1984.

Knapp, Wilfrid. North West Africa: A Political and Economic Survey. London: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Larson, Barbara K. "Local-national Integration in Tunisia." Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 20, No. 1 (January 1984).

Marfleet, Philip. "Tunisia After the Storm." The Middle East. March 1984.

Marfleet, Philip. "The Stick and Carrot Approach." The Middle East. May 1984.

Mortimer, Edward. Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam. New York: Random House, 1982.

Nolan, Riall W. "Tunisia's Time of Transition." Current History. December 1981.

Rossi, Pierre. Bourguiba's Tunisia. Tunis: Editions Kahia, 1967.

Tessler, Mark. "Tunisia at the Crossroads." Current History. May 1985.

"Tunisia's Economic Growth Prospects." The Arab World Weekly, No. 691. 29 October 1983.

U.S. Department of State. Background Notes: Tunisia. September 1984.

Vandewalle, Dirk. "Bourguiba, Charismatic Leadership and the Tunisian One Party System." The Middle East Journal. October 1981.

Wright, Claudia. "Tunisians Take Their Pick." The Middle East. (October 1981).

Wright, Claudia. "Twilight for the Bourguiba Regime?" Atlantic. November 1980.

Wright, Marcus. "Tunisia - Sick Leader." Middle East Economic Digest. 9 November 1984.

Zartman, I. William, ed. Man, State and Society in the Contemporary Maghrib. New York: Praeger, 1973.

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

| | No. Copies |
|---|---|
| 1. Department Chairman, Code 56<br>Department of National Security Affairs<br>Naval Postgraduate School<br>Monterey, California 93943 | 1 |
| 2. Library, Code 0142<br>Naval Postgraduate School<br>Monterey, California 93943-5002 | 2 |
| 3. Curricular Officer, Code 38<br>Department of National Security Affairs<br>Naval Postgraduate School<br>Monterey, California 93943 | 1 |
| 4. Center for Naval Analyses<br>2000 North Beauregard Street<br>P.O. Box 11280<br>Alexandria, Virginia 22311 | 1 |
| 5. Defense Technical Information Center<br>Cameron Station<br>Alexandria, Virginia 22304-6145 | 2 |
| 6. U. S. Liaison Office - Tunis<br>Department of State<br>Washington, D.C. 20520 | 8 |
| 7. Department of the Navy<br>Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Code OP-06<br>Washington, D.C. 20350 | 1 |
| 8. Defense Intelligence College, Code DIC-2D<br>Washington, D.C. 20301-6111 | 1 |

9. OASD, ISA
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350

1

LD2 .I97

Thesis
0523 Olson
c.1 The United States and Tunisia: a foreign policy analysis

thesO523
The United States and Tunisia: a foreig
3 2768 000 65560 9
DUDLEY KNOX LIBRARY